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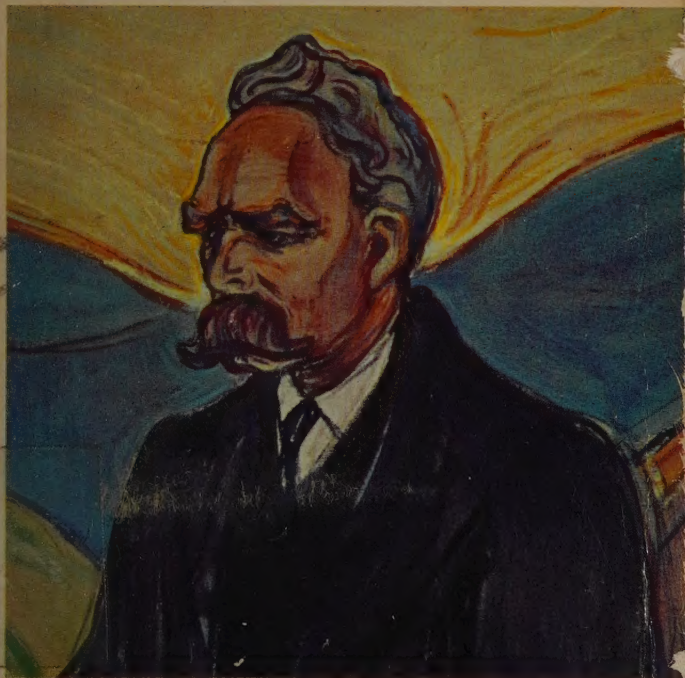
Modern Studies in Philosophy



NIETZSCHE

A Collection of Critical Essays

Edited by Robert Solomon



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54

MODERN STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY

NIETZSCHE



MODERN STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY is a series of anthologies presenting contemporary interpretations and evaluations of the works of major philosophers. The editors have selected articles designed to show the systematic structure of the thought of these philosophers and to reveal the relevance of their views to problems of current interest. These volumes are intended to be contributions to contemporary debates as well as to the history of philosophy; they not only trace the origins of many problems important to modern philosophy, but also introduce major philosophers as interlocutors in current discussions.

Modern Studies in Philosophy is prepared under the general editorship of Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, Livingston College, Rutgers University.

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MODERN STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY

AMELIE OKSENBERG RORTY,
GENERAL EDITOR

NIETZSCHE

A COLLECTION
OF CRITICAL ESSAYS

EDITED BY
ROBERT C. SOLOMON

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CONTENTS

Chronology	vi
Editor's Note on Abbreviations	viii
Introduction	1
Lou Andreas-Salomé on Nietzsche	8
1. Walter Kaufmann, The Death of God and the Revaluation	9
2. Arthur Danto, Nietzsche's Perspectivism	29
3. Richard Schacht, Nietzsche and Nihilism	58
4. Hans Vaihinger, Nietzsche and His Doctrine of Conscious Illusion	83
5. Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche as Metaphysician, translated by Joan Stambaugh	105
6. Henry David Aiken, Introduction to <i>Zarathustra</i>	114
7. Karl Jaspers, Man as His Own Creator	131
8. Philippa Foot, Nietzsche: The Revaluation of Values	156
9. Kathryn Pyne Parsons, Nietzsche and Moral Change	169
10. Frederick A. Olafson, Nietzsche, Kant, and Existentialism	194
11. Robert C. Solomon, Nietzsche, Nihilism, and Morality	202
12. Walter Kaufmann, The Discovery of the Will to Power	226
13. Max Scheler, Ressentiment	243
14. Tracy Strong, Nietzsche and Politics: parables of the shepherd and the herd	258
15. Mitchell Ginsberg, Nietzschean Psychiatry	293
16. Arthur Danto, The Eternal Recurrence	316
17. Ivan Soll, Reflections on Recurrence: A Re-examination of Nietzsche's Doctrine, <i>die Ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen</i>	322
18. Arnold Zuboff, Nietzsche and Eternal Recurrence	343
19. Thomas Mann, Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of Contemporary Events	358
20. George Bernard Shaw, Nietzsche in English	371
21. Hermann Hesse, Zarathustra's Return	375
Bibliography	386
Notes on Contributors	390

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
Chronology

- 1844 (Oct. 15) Born in Röcken, Saxony, Prussia.
- 1849 (July 30) Death of his father.
- 1850 Family moves to Naumburg, Nietzsche lives with his mother, sister, and three elderly women relatives.
- 1858-64 Moves away to boarding school.
- 1864 (Oct.) Begins classical philology and theology studies at University of Bonn.
- 1865 (Oct.) Begins studies at Leipzig; quits theology; "discovers" Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Idea*.
- 1866 Begins friendship with Erwin Rohde.
- 1868 (Nov. 8) Meets Wagner for the first time, in Leipzig.
- 1869 Is given the chair of Classical Letters at the University of Basel, and his doctorate, without the customary examination, on the strength of the recommendations of his teacher, Friedrich Ritschl, who prophesied that Nietzsche, "If-God grant-he lives long enough, . . . will stand in the front rank of German philology."
(May 17) Visits Wagner for the first time.
Meets Jacob Burckhardt.
- 1870 Nietzsche becomes a Swiss citizen, but volunteers for army duty with the Prussian medical corps when war breaks out in France. During his brief service, he becomes desperately sick, and never gains his full health again.
Beginning of friendship with Franz Overbeck.
- 1872 *Birth of Tragedy* published.
- 1873-74 First "Untimely" Meditations on Strauss, history, and Schopenhauer.
- 1875 Friendship with Peter Gast.
- 1876 Nietzsche goes to Bayreuth for the first Bayreuth festival.
Writes "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth," the fourth "Untimely" Meditation.
Meets with Wagner for the last time, in Italy.
Takes the year off from the university because of ill health.
Friendship with Paul Rée.
- 1878 *Human, All Too Human* published; Wagner's last letter to Nietzsche.

- 1879 Nietzsche resigns from the university, formally for reasons of health.
- 1880 *The Wanderer and His Shadow* published.
- 1881 *Dawn* published.
Nietzsche begins his lonely migrations, the Riviera in the winter (Genoa, Rapallo, Nice), summers in Sils-Maria in Switzerland.
- 1882 (April–Nov.) Nietzsche's friendship with Lou Andreas-Salomé.
Gay Science published.
- 1883 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Parts I and II (Rapallo) written and published.
- 1884 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Part III (Nice) written and published.
- 1885 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Part IV written (Nice). Published in private edition.
- 1886 *Beyond Good and Evil* published.
- 1887 *Genealogy of Morals* published.
- 1888 *The Case of Wagner* published.
Georg Brandes lectures on Nietzsche's philosophy at the University of Copenhagen.
Antichrist written (publication delayed).
Twilight of the Idols written (publication delayed).
Nietzsche Contra Wagner written (publication delayed).
Ecce Homo written (publication delayed).
- 1889 (Jan.) Nietzsche collapses in Torino. General paralysis follows.
- 1897 Nietzsche's mother dies. His sister moves him to Weimar.
- 1900 (Aug. 25) Nietzsche dies in Weimar; buried with his parents in Röcken.

EDITOR'S NOTE
on Abbreviations

Unless otherwise indicated, all references to Nietzsche's works are incorporated in the text in parentheses, abbreviated as follows:

The Birth of Tragedy (Die Geburt der Tragödie)	BT
Untimely Meditations (Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen)	U—
David Strauss, the Confessor and Writer	U ₁
On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life	U ₂
Schopenhauer as Educator	U ₃
Richard Wagner in Bayreuth	U ₄
Human, All Too Human (Menschliches, Allzumenschliches)	HAH
Mixed Opinions and Maxims (Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche)	MOM or HAH II
The Wanderer and His Shadow (Der Wanderer und sein Schatten)	W&S
Dawn (Die Morgenröte)	Dawn
The Gay Science (Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft)	GS
Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Also Sprach Zarathustra)	Z
Beyond Good and Evil (Jenseits von Gut und Böse)	BGE
The Genealogy of Morals (Zur Genealogie der Moral)	GM
The Case of Wagner (Der Fall Wagner)	CW
Twilight of the Idols (Die Götzen-Dämmerung)	Twilight
The Antichrist (Der Antichrist)	A
Ecce Homo	EH
The Will to Power (Der Wille zur Macht—notes)	WP

All references to the above works are to section or aphorism numbers, not page numbers. All other references in Roman numerals are to the Collected Works, the German Musarion edition unless otherwise specified.

INTRODUCTION

Nietzsche's philosophical genius has long been eclipsed by his flamboyant style, by his tragic biography, and by his notorious "influence." Our first encounter with Nietzsche typically offers us a caricature of the "mad philosopher," a distant yet myopic glare of fury, leaden eyebrows and drooping mustache, the posture of a Prussian soldier caught out of uniform by a French cartoonist of the 1870s. We are told that *Zarathustra* was the book carried by the Kaiser's soldiers. We are offered an aphorism snatched from its context which conjures up images of Nazi horror. Worst of all, we find ourselves feeling *pity*—that emotion Nietzsche could not have despised more—for the "old artilleryman" who returned from less than a year of non-combat war service a physically broken man; *pity* for the virulently verbal male chauvinist who perhaps never enjoyed a single sexual encounter in his life—and died of syphilis. There has been such protracted controversy over Nietzsche's alleged fascist sympathies and Nazi influence, his pathetic relations with women, including his mother and sister, the nature of his disease and the exact time of the onset of its tragic effects that Nietzsche's philosophy barely emerges as an incidental though brilliant psychological reaction to a singularly lonely and tragic life.

Such biography has had its place. I have included none of it here, save a short chronology. In this volume, I have attempted to portray Nietzsche as a philosopher, a thinker occupied with philosophical problems of justification, value, science and knowledge, truth and God. I see this as a form of Nietzsche-interpretation and criticism that has been emerging for several years, in detailed studies by Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, in Walter Kaufmann's classic study, and more recently in Arthur Danto's reinterpretation along strictly analytical lines.

1. Martin Heidegger has interpreted Nietzsche as the last of the great metaphysicians in a tradition that began with Plato. It is strange to hear of Nietzsche as a "metaphysician," but this oddness is itself a symptom of the severity of the unphilosophical portrait that has been forced upon us. Nietzsche's thought is, in fact, vitally concerned with certain dualisms that have beset philosophy from Plato to Kant. Plato had distinguished between the *apparent* world of "becoming" and the *real* world of "being," the former but the shadows cast by the latter. Traditional Christianity had taken this meta-

physical distinction and added a practical interpretation. The apparent world, the world of the flesh, of temporary passions and temptations, was of little importance contrasted with the eternity of Heaven and Hell. Immanuel Kant readjusted the distinction, nominally rejecting both the merely apparent world and the real world-in-itself but reintroducing a distinction between the phenomenal world of sensibility and understanding and the timeless realm of practical reason and the Divine world-in-itself. While the method of drawing such distinctions varied markedly from philosopher to philosopher, the result was always a schizoid world view, what Hegel called "the unhappy consciousness." For Nietzsche, all such Platonic-Christian-Kantian distinctions rested upon a nostalgia for the "other-worldly." Against Socrates' discovery of the "true world," Nietzsche comments that it is but a symptom of Socrates' and Athens' decline, a weariness of life, his "tyranny of reason" a desperate attempt to overcome degrading passions and unconscious instincts (Twilight ii). Against Kant's distinction between the world of appearance and the world-in-itself (the phenomenal, sensible world of knowledge and the noumenal, intelligible world of God, freedom, and morality), Nietzsche argues that this is the last effort in behalf of the "other-worldly." It is, if not a proof of the "true world," at least a way of making it "irrefutable" (A 10). Against Christian metaphysics, Nietzsche agrees with Kant that such can never be *knowledge* for us but only the *presuppositions* of morality. But against this morality, Nietzsche goes on to argue that it is itself unjustifiable, a product of decadence that takes refuge in reason and metaphysics. Against Kant, Nietzsche argues that there is no "moral world order," no "moral facts," no a priori and universal "categorical imperatives." All such beliefs betray a "bad intellectual conscience," a "hostility to life," "even to reason." They are attempts to deny the instincts and the individual; they are products of weakness and "herd-consciousness."

In Nietzsche's attack upon the "other-worldly" and morality, he typically avoids any direct confrontation with the philosophical rationalizations and justifications that such thought has traditionally demanded. Instead, Nietzsche turns to the *motivation* of these doctrines, and he sees himself as a "psychologist," a "diagnostician," a "vivisectionist" rather than one who proceeds according to the same Socratic or Cartesian rules as his subject matter.

This kind of examination—a "genealogy" as opposed to

Kant's "criticism"—must not be confused, as it has been traditionally, with either *ad hominem* argument or "irrationalism." Nietzsche's point is philosophically profound (though not, as he sometimes thought, entirely original): "reason" does not provide its own justifications; all justifications lead back to *purposes*. Nietzsche's meta-moral philosophy is designed not to "rationalize" our scattered moral prejudices, nor to provide a metaphysical justification, but to discover their unifying motivating principle. Nietzsche's argument, directed primarily against Kant, is that the unifying principle of morality has not been the demand for universalizability and respect for humanity that is formulated in the "categorical imperative," but that underlying that demand is the desperation of the weak in spirit and their need for protection, from each other, from themselves, and from those who are stronger. Nietzsche does not reject "reason" or "justification"; he rather points out, on the basis of the presumption that only "life" provides justification, that the justification of (Judaean-Christian bourgeois) morality and its metaphysical presuppositions is based upon a lie, a piece of self-deception. Morality pretends to be the practical embodiment of disinterested reason, those selfless principles which will promote mutual respect and the "Kingdom of Ends." But in fact, Nietzsche argues, moral values, like all values, aim at the maximization of personal power, and the denial of this "will to power" is but a deception of the weak in order to maximize their slight power at the expense of those who are stronger. Again using "life" as his criterion, Nietzsche argues that "truth" is not the correspondence between our ideas and the "real world," but the value of those ideas for "life" (even if, Nietzsche ironically adds, those ideas turn out to be errors).

There are serious obscurities surrounding Nietzsche's criterion of "life" and such related notions as "will to power," and the limits of his attacks upon reason, the "other-worldly," and various forms of justification are not always clear. Accordingly, there are various senses and degrees to which interpreters have made Nietzsche out to be a "nihilist," to be "anti-moral," to be a "philosopher" rather than a "psychologist" (a distinction Nietzsche would rightly have rejected).

2. It is ironic that Nietzsche (like Kierkegaard) should have to suffer so from his interpreters' adherence to his own demand for "psychologizing." Under the guidance of this methodological rule, badly interpreted, the brilliance of *Zarathustra* has been reduced to an expression of Nietzsche's loneliness follow-

ing the break with Lou Salomé in 1882; the psychological insight of *The Will to Power* has been dismissed as a projection of Nietzsche's own persistent infirmities; and the crucial arguments of the *Antichrist* and *Ecce Homo* have been neglected as products of encroaching madness. Even the early "campaign against morality" and attacks upon Christianity have been reinterpreted psychologically as reactions to Nietzsche's puritanical Lutheran upbringing. But to be a "philosopher who is also a psychologist" is not to argue *ad hominem*. To treat the philosophy and the philosopher together is not yet to confuse either with the eccentricities of an individual. As Karl Jaspers has written elsewhere of Nietzsche,¹ the problem is to philosophize not as an exception but "in the light of the exception." What is philosophical in Nietzsche is precisely not those aspects of his thought that are *merely* a product of his peculiarities, but those which, once expressed, are not mere autobiography or personal expression but *ideas*. This is not to make the leap to universality, nor to suppose that these ideas purport to be necessary and universal truths. Nietzsche and Kant are contrary, but not contradictory to each other. In between "true for one" and "true for all" is "true for many," or at least, "true for a few," and this is the realm of Nietzsche's ideas. So, to follow Nietzsche's attack on disembodied rationality, to look with him for "the function of an idea (value) in the life of a people" is not to psychologize in that vulgar sense of which Nietzsche has been a victim. As he complains in one of his early works,

The worst readers of aphorisms are the author's friends if they are intent on guessing back from the general to the particular instance to which the aphorism owes its origin; for with such pot-pecking they reduce the author's whole effort to nothing; so that they deservedly gain, not a philosophic outlook or instruction, but—at best, or at worst—nothing more than the satisfaction of vulgar curiosity. (MOM, 1879, 129)

Nietzsche sees himself, as he saw Socrates and Christ, as a *decadent*, a "symptom of decline." He sees himself as both "untimely," the first of a new breed of philosophers, a "free spirit," but as "no less than Wagner, a child of the nineteenth century." His complaints are far more than the bitchiness of an isolated individual; they are, in the words of his admirer Hermann Hesse, "the sickness of the times themselves." Hesse goes on to say,

¹ *Reason and Existenz*, trans. W. Earle (New York: Noonday Press, 1955).

. . . there are times when a whole generation is caught in this way between two ages, two modes of life, with the consequence that it loses all power to understand itself and has no standard, no security, no simple acquiescence. Naturally everyone does not feel this equally. A nature such as Nietzsche's had to suffer our present ills more than a generation in advance. What he had to go through alone and misunderstood, thousands suffer today. (*Steppenwolf*, Preface)

From this uncomfortable perspective, Nietzsche was able to see more clearly than any other man the frauds and weaknesses of nineteenth-century German philosophy, culture, and nationalism. Unlike Hegel, who could look backwards and find progress and harmony, and unlike Schopenhauer, who could dismiss these findings with self-satisfied irony, Nietzsche attempts to throw himself forward into the future. He sees the possibility of a new kind of man, more than "all too human," and he also sees new horrors, wars, fascism, chaos, or, what is worst, "the last man," the petty bourgeois who is "as ineradicable as the flea-beetle," "who says, 'we have invented happiness,' and blinks." But the vision is cloudy, and the ideal of the *Übermensch* and the contemptible last man, like the nature of the coming century as a whole, can be no more than vaguely perceived possibilities and horrors.

3. Nietzsche's style as well as the substance of his thought varies remarkably throughout his philosophical career. In *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche distinguishes three "metamorphoses of the spirit," suggested respectively by the camel, the lion, and the child. These metaphors have been aptly applied to Nietzsche's own development. In his earliest works, written as a young professor of classical philology, Nietzsche's rebellious brilliance is very much under the domination of his discipline, his typically German Romantic enchantment with the early Greeks, his cultural hero and friend Richard Wagner, and the pessimistic Kantian philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer. *The Birth of Tragedy*, written in this period, although wild and unscholarly for an academic work, is still very much a scholar's study in prose form.

The "dawn" of a new temperament, a "gay science" replaces the seriousness of academic scholarship. Nietzsche writes a piece on Wagner (though not yet attacking him), and that friendship, largely based upon Nietzsche's subservience, comes to an end. The admiration for Schopenhauer suffers a similar fate, for there is little room in "the gay science" for pessimistic metaphysics. Allegedly because of poor health,

Nietzsche resigns from the university. Though his thorough knowledge of classical and biblical texts remains evident throughout his works, it never again serves as their central theme or structure. In the place of the straight prose of *Birth of Tragedy*, this "lion" period turns to experiments in style as well as in thought. In aphoristic works such as *The Gay Science* and *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche displays his greatest stylistic virtuosity as well as those insights which are to coalesce into his mature philosophy. These insights are dramatically and briefly stated, as, for example, "there is no truth" and "morality is herd-instinct in the individual." At this point of his work, Nietzsche's philosophical style and temperament (as well as the substance) are remarkably similar to the later Wittgenstein's. The terse aphorisms become so condensed that one cannot help but see the violent struggle between age-old philosophical tradition and barely newborn ideas which the elegant brevity fails to hide. But Nietzsche, unlike Wittgenstein, has fun in his struggle. He rarely resists a pun or a sarcastic remark on some topic or other. And it is here, more than anywhere else, that the "blond beast" or lion metaphor of Nietzsche's philosophy could not be further from the Aryan ideal for which Nietzsche's philosophy was so distorted fifty years later.

In the last works, beginning with *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche formulates "his philosophy." One might well question whether such a thing can be found, particularly if one mixes the diversity of the earlier writings together with the later works. Because of the scattered nature of Nietzsche's writings, there is an important and influential school of Nietzschean interpretation, of which Karl Jaspers is now the foremost example, which maintains that Nietzsche is intentionally unsystematic and that one must never rest in his interpretation of any element of Nietzsche's thought "until he has also found the contradiction." Now it is true that Nietzsche distrusts Hegelian or Kantian philosophical systems or "architectonic," particularly in his middle experimental period, as a sign of intellectual timidity or dishonesty. But "Nietzsche's philosophy" need not be systematic in *this* sense, and it is not even necessary, in order to point to "his philosophy," that he himself ever formulated it as such at all. All that need be claimed is that the later works, notably *Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *Genealogy of Morals*, *Twilight of the Idols*, *The Antichrist*, and various notes and projects (collected as *The Will to Power*) bring together and develop the dominant themes of "the re-

valuation of values," strength and weakness and "the will to power," the "death of God" and the critique of Christianity, the *Übermensch*, and the eternal recurrence. The image of the child here is apt not as a symbol of innocence and newness but as a sign of *rebirth*. Nietzsche is careful to stress that the new-found thoughts are anything but innocent or pristine; they are born not only out of a decade of personal struggle, but out of nineteen centuries of European suffering.

But the diversity and disorganization of much of Nietzsche's thought gives Jaspers' interpretation an unfortunate yet undeniable status as a permanent warning to Nietzsche readers. There is so much here that everyone can find his own Nietzsche. This is not to say that there is no distinction between responsible and reproachable Nietzsche scholarship, nor is it to deny that there are portraits of Nietzsche's thought which are simply false—for example, that offered us by the Nazis.) But it is to say, as Nietzsche says of all knowledge, there are *only interpretations*. Perhaps this is true of every philosopher, but the variety of interpretations could not be greater than for Nietzsche. In the selections which follow, I have attempted to capture this variety while at the same time focusing upon a small number of key issues in Nietzsche's thought.

4. I have attempted to gather together as diverse a collection of essays as possible on Nietzsche's philosophy. Some of the contributors are renowned Nietzsche scholars; others are philosophers who trace a personal debt to Nietzsche, or turned to Nietzsche as a diversion, as a curiosity, or as a surprising source of new insights for their own work. Several of the essays are published here for the first time, and some of the pieces are written by young philosophers who have never written about Nietzsche before. Some of the essays betray an obstinate tenacity to traditional prejudices and myths; others are conscientious attempts to break away from traditional patterns of Nietzsche interpretation. I expect that no reader will wholly approve of every piece in this collection, and it is logically impossible that he should agree with all of their interpretations. But as Nietzsche repeatedly tells us, "there are only interpretations."

I am indebted to Amelie Rorty for her encouragement to undertake this project. I am doubly grateful to Walter Kaufmann for his generous criticism of both the form and the substance of this volume as well as his personal efforts in obtaining permissions to reprint his two selections. I thank Ronnie Shushan, my editor, who helped the manuscript through the

trials of production and legalities. Ultimately, I am indebted to the contributors of the essays, and, where appropriate, to their publishers, for making this volume possible. It is my hope that their efforts will continue to encourage the discovery of a profound and very human—perhaps all-too-human—philosopher who has too long been ignored and distorted by the wrong kinds of admiration and criticism.

R.C.S.

New York City

June 10, 1972

"Something concealed, an intimation of an unspoken loneliness—that was the first strong impression that gave Nietzsche's appearance its captivating power. It offered nothing striking to the casual observer; the medium-sized man in extremely simple and extremely neat clothes, with serene features and brown hair, smoothly brushed back, could easily be overlooked. He had a light laugh, a quiet way of speaking, and a cautious, pensive way of walking with his shoulders slightly stooped; it was difficult to imagine this figure in the midst of a crowd, for it bore the stamp of one who stands apart and alone. His hands were nobly formed and incomparably beautiful—so much so that one could not help looking at them. . . . His eyes, too, spoke a revealing language. Though half blind, they nevertheless had nothing of the spying, blinking, unintentionally intrusive way of many near-sighted persons; rather they seemed like guardians and keepers of inner treasures and mute secrets. . . . Faulty vision endowed his features with a very special kind of charm by causing them to reflect his innermost psychic processes rather than fleeting external impressions. These eyes looked inward and, at the same time, into the distance or, better still: inward as if into a distance. Whenever, under the spell of a stimulating conversation with one other person, he revealed his true self, an inspiring light would come into his eyes; but when he was in a dark mood, his loneliness spoke from them, ominously, almost threateningly, as if from monstrous depths. Nietzsche's overt behavior, too, conveyed the impression of things concealed and unspoken. In everyday life he showed great courtesy and an almost feminine gentleness—a constant, goodhearted equanimity. He took pleasure in the refined forms of social intercourse. . . . But in it all lay a penchant for disguise. . . . I recall that when I spoke to him for the first time, his deliberately formal manner shocked and deceived me. But I was not deceived for long by this lonesome man who only wore his mask as unalterably as someone coming from the desert and mountains wears the cloak of the worldly-wise. . . ."

Lou Andreas-Salomé, 1882

(quoted in Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, trans. Walraff and Schmitz, Tucson 1965, pp. 37–38).

THE DEATH OF GOD AND THE REVALUATION

WALTER KAUFMANN

Not only the reason of millennia—their insanity, too, breaks out in us.—Z 1 22.

I

Nietzsche himself has characterized the situation in which his philosophic thinking started by giving it the name of nihilism. This feature of his age struck him as a challenge he meant to meet, and we must not ignore the historical juncture at which he enters the philosophic stage. Speculative philosophy seemed to have spent itself in the ambitious systems of Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer; and Darwin's doctrines were conquering the world. At the same time, Prussian arms established Germany's political supremacy on the continent; science and technology were making the most spectacular advances; and optimism was common. Nietzsche, however, stigmatized this age as nihilistic.

All the material improvements of his time meant as much to Nietzsche as the luxuries and comforts of their generation had meant to Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah: they disgusted him. Only one thing seemed to matter, and it was incomprehensible that anyone could have eyes or ears for any other fact. What else avails? "God is dead!"

Nietzsche invented a parable from which, some eighty years later, a few American Protestant theologians derived inspiration—and this slogan.

The Madman. Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly, "I seek God! I seek God!" As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Why, did he get lost? said one. Did he lose his way like a child? said another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? or emigrated? Thus they yelled and laughed. The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his glances. "Whither is God?" he cried. "I shall tell you.

Selection from Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Third Revised and Enlarged Edition. Copyright 1950 © 1968 by Princeton University Press: pp. 96–113, 115 through 118. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.

We have killed him—you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night and more night coming on all the while? . . . God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. . . . What was holiest and most powerful of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off us? . . .” Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners; and they too were silent and stared at him in astonishment. At last he threw his lantern on the ground, and it broke and went out. “I come too early,” he said then; “my time has not come yet. This tremendous event is still on its way . . . —it has not yet reached the ears of man. Lightning and thunder require time, the light of the stars requires time, deeds require time even after they are done, before they can be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars—and yet they have done it themselves.”—It has been related further that on that same day the madman entered divers churches and there sang his *requiem aeternam deo*. Led out and called to account, he is said to have replied every time, “What are these churches now if they are not the tombs and speculchers of God?” (GS 125; cf. Z Preface 2).

Nietzsche prophetically envisages himself as a madman: to have lost God means madness; and when mankind will discover that it has lost God, universal madness will break out. This apocalyptic sense of dreadful things to come hangs over Nietzsche’s thinking like a thundercloud.

We have destroyed our own faith in God. There remains only the void. We are falling. Our dignity is gone. Our values are lost. Who is to say what is up and what is down? It has become colder, and night is closing in. Without seeking to explain away Nietzsche’s illness, one can hardly fail today to consider it also symbolical. “Not only the reason of millennia—their insanity, too, breaks out in us” (Z I 22). We cannot distinguish what sense he may have had of his own doom from his presentiment of universal disaster.

The prophet Hosea was married, and when his wife became unfaithful to him, he experienced his relationship to her as a simile of God’s relationship to Israel. Was not his wife as faithless as his people? Yet he loved her as God must love his people. Who can say if his anguished outcries, his protes-

tations of his love, and his pleading for the loved one to return are meant for his wife or his people? Sometimes prophecy seems to consist in man's ability to experience his own wretched fate so deeply that it becomes a symbol of something larger. It is in this sense that one can compare Nietzsche with the ancient prophets. He felt the agony, the suffering, and the misery of a godless world so intensely, at a time when others were yet blind to its tremendous consequence, that he was able to experience in advance, as it were, the fate of a coming generation.

If the doctrines of sovereign Becoming, of the fluidity of all . . . species, of the lack of any cardinal distinction between man and animal . . . are hurled into the people for another generation . . . then nobody should be surprised when . . . brotherhoods with the aim of robbery and exploitation of the non-brothers . . . will appear on the arena of the future (U₂ 9).

Yet educated people everywhere were surprised when these unholy brotherhoods did appear. It seemed an incomprehensible relapse into the Dark Ages. Nietzsche's writings abound in similar "prophecies"—yet we should lay stress on the conditional character of his visions: "if the doctrines . . . of the lack of any cardinal distinction between man and animal . . . are hurled into the people for another generation," if mankind realizes that the unique worth of the human being has evaporated, and that no up and down remains, and if the tremendous event that we have killed God reaches the ears of man—then night will close in, "an age of barbarism begins" (XI, 120), and "there will be wars such as have never happened on earth" (EH IV 1). Insofar as Jeremiah's criterion of prophecy is valid and the false prophet is he who cries "peace, peace, when there is no peace," while the true prophets have ever spoken "of evils, and of pestilence, and of wars," one may feel inclined to consider Nietzsche a prophet in the true sense.

The content of Nietzsche's message, however, no less than the form it entails, offers the most striking contrast to the Biblical prophets. He lacks their humility which, while defying the judgment of mankind, yet knows itself no more than a mouthpiece of God. Nietzsche seems less appealing than the ancient prophets because his outrageous conceit steps between him and us. Yet if there is any sense in which he seems more appealing, it is that he thus appears more wretched, more forsaken, and more tragic. Perhaps we should go back to the Greeks rather than to the Bible to find his like: Cassandra,

prophetess of doom without promise and nemesis without love. Here we are confronted with ineluctable fate, unmitigated by salvation; here, among the Greeks, we find tragedy—and it does not seem strange that Nietzsche should have had such a feeling for tragedy.

Does it follow that Nietzsche was not a great questioner after all? If he proclaimed the death of God, it may be said, he did not question all that is questionable. And Morgan has said that “beyond question the major premise of Nietzsche’s philosophy is atheism.”¹

This is often assumed, and authors have not been lacking who have sought to explain Nietzsche’s atheism as a reaction against the narrow-minded Christians of his provincial home town. John Figgis, in particular, has given us a moving description of the aunts who shook their heads when the young man took a walk instead of going to church, and the uncles who were shocked to see him read Voltaire and offered him “good” books.² One gathers that if Nietzsche had only been confronted with a more liberal outlook, he might have been spared a lot of trouble. Any such psychological trivialization of Nietzsche’s ideas—even if less patronizing than this one—quite misses the point. It is generally rather easy to discover a connection between an author’s background and his work; but if the author is worth his salt, his own experience has usually become the occasion for a more general insight. Nietzsche is not opposing claim to claim. He is not saying, as it were: you have been told that there is a God, but verily I say unto you, There is no God. What he does say is “God is dead.”

This is the language of religion, and particularly of Christianity: the picture is derived from the Gospels; and one may note that Hegel, certainly not an atheist, had frequently spoken and written of the death of God. Nietzsche infuses a new meaning into this old image, while yet implying clearly that God once was alive. It seems paradoxical that God, if ever he lived, could have died—and the solution is that Nietzsche’s pronouncement does not at all purport to be a dogmatic statement about a supernatural reality: it is a declaration of what he takes to be a historical cultural fact. “God is dead”; “we have killed him”; and “this tremendous event . . . has not yet reached the ears of man”—that is an attempt at a diagnosis

¹ Morgan, *op. cit.*, 36.

² *The Will to Freedom, or the Gospel of Nietzsche and the Gospel of Christ* (1917), 50. “He was in reaction against his aunts” (51).

of contemporary civilization, not a metaphysical speculation about ultimate reality.³

It may yet seem that Nietzsche assumes as a premise what is merely a growing belief—or disbelief—in Western society. He may appear to accept as an absolute presupposition the claim that there is no God—and in that case we should have laid our hands on a questionable assumption he failed to doubt. This construction, too, is untenable. Because Nietzsche did *not* start with any premises that he consciously failed to question, he *could* not base his philosophy on the assumed existence of God. This is overlooked when it is claimed that he never questioned atheism seriously: “rather he describes himself as an atheist ‘by instinct.’”⁴ The very passage in which Nietzsche does describe himself in this manner confirms what has been said of his method:

It is a matter of course with me, from instinct. I am too inquisitive, too *questionable*, too exuberant to stand for any gross answer. God is a gross answer, an indelicacy against us thinkers—at bottom merely a gross prohibition for us: you shall not think! (EH II 1; cf. GM III 27).

Nietzsche’s atheism is thus a corollary of his basic commitment to question all premises and to reject them unless they are for some reason inescapable.

The issue has been confused by the invective which Nietzsche poured on Christianity and the Christian conception of God: “What differentiates *us* is not that we find no God—neither in history, nor in nature, nor behind nature—but that we do not feel that what has been revered as God is ‘god-like’” (A 47). Nietzsche is in revolt against the Christian God and the state of mind and the moral attitude that seem to him insepa-

³ Heine, whom Nietzsche admired fervently (e.g., EH II 4), had used the image of the death of God in much the same way in *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*. At the end of Book II, Heine commented on the publication of Kant’s first *Critique*: “Do you hear the little bell tinkle? Kneel down—one brings the sacraments for a dying God.” Beyond this, the conception of “the history of religion and philosophy in Germany” as a unit, and the treatment of Luther as the background for Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel, may have impressed Nietzsche. But Heine’s picture of Luther, while ironical, is incomparably more appreciative than Nietzsche’s and clearly influenced by Hegel under whom Heine had studied.

⁴ Morgan, *op. cit.*, 36.

rably connected with the Christian faith. His anti-Christianity is taken up in detail in Chapter 12 of my *Nietzsche*.

Nietzsche was more deeply impressed than almost any other man before him by the manner in which belief in God and a divine teleology may diminish the value and significance of man: how *this* world and life may be completely devaluated *ad maiorem dei gloriam*. Yet Nietzsche did not proceed to postulate—as others have done since, partly under his influence—the nonexistence of God or of any divine purpose. We must not attribute to him “the postulated atheism of seriousness and responsibility” that is meant to assure human responsibility.⁵ The roots of this attitude can be found quite unmistakably in some of Nietzsche’s epigrams; but while he was keenly aware of the sense in which the existence of God might diminish the value of man,⁶ he was no less aware of, if not altogether overwhelmed by, the manner in which the nonexistence of God would threaten human life with a complete loss of all significance.

This sense of the utter bleakness of life and the “devaluation” (WP 2) of all values, which is the immediate consequence of the modern loss of faith in God, is not just a casual insight which can be illustrated by the parable of the madman or by some other scattered aphorisms: most of the drafts for the *magnum opus* envisage as the contents of the first book a development of this theme to which Nietzsche gave the name of nihilism. In fact, one plan would have devoted three out of four books to this conception (xviii, 345). To overcome nihilism—which seems involved both in asserting the existence of God and thus robbing *this* world of ultimate significance, and also in denying God and thus robbing *everything* of meaning and value—that is Nietzsche’s greatest and most persistent problem.

When the problem is phrased differently, Nietzsche’s experimental attitude becomes more apparent. He opposed the kind of naturalism that he put within quotation marks, i.e., the literary movement associated with Zola (WP 864); and he crystallized his objection in one of his late, and characteristically provocative, epigrams: “Zola, or ‘the delight in stinking’” (Twilight ix 1). In philosophy, however, the word “naturalism” has another sense, which J. M. Baldwin defines in his

⁵ Max Scheler, *Mensch und Geschichte* (1929), 54–60. Scheler claims the concurrence of Nicolai Hartmann, *Ethik* (1926), 185.

⁶ Cf. the entire polemic against otherworldliness; e.g., M 464; G vi 8; WM 243, 245; EH II 3.

Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology as "a view which simply limits itself to what is natural or normal in its explanations, as against appeal to what transcends nature as a whole, or is in any way supernatural or mystical"—and Nietzsche's problem was whether it might be possible to put "in place of our 'moral values' only *naturalistic values*" (WP 462). This experiment does not require the premise that God does not exist. It demands no more than that we agree not to invoke God to cut discussion short.

The account which has been given above of Nietzsche's method is thus consistent with his proclamation that "God is dead" and with his effort to establish values that are not based on any supernatural sanction. Yet the admission that Nietzsche was something of a prophet, and his opposition to the acceptance of current valuations may still suggest that his works cannot be studied philosophically. To answer this charge, it may be well to consider first Nietzsche's attitude toward the philosophical rationalization of prevalent valuations and then the meaning of his own "revaluation of all values."

II

Nietzsche's difference from other naturalistic philosophers must be sought first in his profound concern whether universally valid values and a meaningful life are at all possible in a godless world, and secondly in his impassioned scorn for those who simply take for granted the validity of any particular set of values which happens to have the sanction of their religion, class, society, or state. He did not consider it the philosopher's task to develop his ingenuity, or his disingenuousness, in "the finding of bad reasons for what we believe on instinct."⁷ Nietzsche himself considered his opposition to rationalization a major point of departure from traditional philosophy; and it is undoubtedly the source of many of his most far-reaching differences with Kant and Hegel. Kant's moral philosophy appeared to him a prime instance of the finding of bad reasons for what one believes on instinct—or, in Nietzsche's words: "Kant wanted to prove in a way that would dumfound the 'common man' that the 'common man' was right" (GS 193).

To put it more technically: Kant, as is well known, seems

⁷ F. H. Bradley's famous definition of metaphysics to which he himself added: "but to find these reasons is no less an instinct." *Appearance and Reality* (1891), xiv.

never to have questioned the existence of the moral law as a synthetic judgment *a priori*—i.e., as a proposition which is neither tautological nor dependent on empirical observation, and yet knowable by, and binding on, all rational beings. On the basis of this moral law, Kant sought to establish the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God and a moral world-order—all the while assuming the possibility of synthetic judgments *a priori* as an unquestioned premise. His problem was only *how* such judgments were possible. Thus he skipped the very question with which Nietzsche's thinking about moral values started—and this is the clue to Nietzsche's incessant polemics against Kant.

Nietzsche was not blind to Kant's merits; in his first book he spoke of the "tremendous courage and wisdom of Kant and Schopenhauer" (BT 18); and later he sided with Kant against Schopenhauer on other questions (Dawn 132) and admitted Kant's decisive contribution to philosophy (GS 357). His own philosophy even shows many decided affinities to Kant's; but Kant's failure to question the existence of a universal moral law provoked Nietzsche's attacks which further illustrate his reasons for opposing systems and his "existential" identification of any failure to question with a desire not to experience fully. The merciless personal quality which is thus introduced into Nietzsche's polemics is apparent when he charges Kant with a lack of "intellectual conscience" (A 12) and of "intellectual integrity" (EH-CW 2); nor can Nietzsche resist the temptation of making a pun on "cant" (Twilight ix 1). Nietzsche's conception of "intellectual conscience" is explained by him elsewhere:

The Intellectual Conscience. . . . By far the most lack an intellectual conscience . . . by far the most do not find it contemptible to believe this or that and to live according to it, *without* first having become conscious of the last and surest reasons pro and con, and without even taking the trouble to consider such reasons afterwards—the most gifted men and the most noble women still belong to these "by far the most." Yet what is good-heartedness, refinement, and genius to me, when the human being who has these virtues tolerates slack feelings in his faith and judgments, and when the demand for certainty is not to him the inmost craving and the deepest need—that which distinguishes the higher from the lower men. . . . *Not to question*, not to tremble with the craving and the joy of questioning . . . that is what I feel to be *contemptible*, and this feeling is the first thing I seek in everyone: some foolishness persuades me ever and again that every human being has this feeling, as a human being. It is my kind of injustice (GS 2).

Just as characteristic is the manner in which Nietzsche seeks to explain why Kant failed to question the moral law. His first answer is that "Kant clung to the university, submitted to governments, [and] remained within the appearance of a religious faith" (U₃ 3). He was, "in his attitude toward the State, without greatness" (U₃ 8).

The gist of this argument is that one compromise with the existing order leads to another. *Even* Kant, that is Nietzsche's point, was led to clip the wings of his own spirit. *Even* Kant, whose reasoning power was second to none, stopped short of questioning the moral law, ceased prematurely to think, and thus vitiated his moral philosophy. "A university scholar [*ein Gelehrter*] can never become a philosopher; for even Kant could not do it and remained to the end, in spite of the innate striving of his genius, in a quasi cocoon stage" (U₃ 7). A philosopher, says Nietzsche in this context, must not allow "concepts, opinions, things past, and books" to step "between himself and things." He must not rationalize the valuations of his own society. As Nietzsche sees it, the temptation to do this is particularly great for the German professor who is an employee of the State. Of course, that is a chief reason for his choice of Schopenhauer as his protagonist in the essay in which he attacks the State so fiercely; for Schopenhauer was, unlike Kant and Hegel, no university professor.

As a matter of fact, one may note that Schopenhauer attempted to teach at the university of Berlin, Hegel's stronghold, and that he was a failure—largely because he deliberately chose to deliver his lectures at times when he knew that Hegel would be lecturing, too. In this self-chosen contest he lost out; and his later diatribe *Über die Universitätsphilosophie* (in *Parerga und Paralipomena*) might be considered "sour grapes." Yet the repudiation of universities and of civil life generally as irreconcilable with the life of a thinker is characteristic of the reaction against Hegel. Hegel had taught: "Whoever wants something great, says Goethe, must be able to limit himself"; and Hegel had concluded that political freedom must be sought within the limitations of a responsible role in the civic life of the community. That there was more than this to freedom, he had never dreamed of denying: absolute freedom could be achieved only in the realm of Absolute Spirit, i.e., in art, religion, and philosophy. Such pursuits, however, did not seem to him to involve the rejection of civic life, but only its completion. The living example was Goethe who combined a civic career of public service as a

cabinet minister in Weimar with artistic creation of the highest order.⁸

Schopenhauer marked only the initial reaction against this ideal. Ludwig Feuerbach, Arnold Ruge, Bruno Bauer, and Eugen Dühring lost their positions at various universities; Max Stirner struggled along in enforced privacy; Marx, although a doctor of philosophy, did not teach, and spent his life in exile; and Kierkegaard never made use of his theological degree to become a minister.⁹ The political views that led to the early retirement of some of these men are, of course, themselves expressive of a historic change. Kant, instead of resigning, got along with a mediocre and impertinent king; and Fichte had an illustrious civic career after the *Atheismus-Streit*.

Nietzsche, who wrote his most important books in privacy, had given ill health as his reason for resigning his professorship at Basel; but his state of health was connected with his inability to reconcile his university career with his writing. The essay on Schopenhauer was published when he was still a professor, and he made it clear then and there that he felt that any compromise with the existing order prevented a thinker from "following the truth into all hide-outs" (U₃ 8).

Thus we find some methodological significance even in

⁸ Cf. *Rechtsphilosophie*; the quotation is from §13 *Zusatz*. The sphere of Absolute Spirit is the topic of *Phänomenologie*, Parts VII and VIII, and of *Encyclopädie*, §§553–77. The popular view that the political sphere was for Hegel the highest, and that the State was his God, is quite untenable, as any reference to his system as a whole (*Encyclopädie*) shows readily enough. Much damage has been done by an oft quoted sentence which is ascribed to Hegel: "the State is the march of God through the world." The sentence is from Scribner's *Hegel Selections*, represents a plain mistranslation, and was not even in its German form written by Hegel. Though there is no indication whatever of this in the *Selections*, the sentence is taken from a *Zusatz* (addition) to §258; and the *Zusätze* were added by Eduard Gans in the posthumous edition, with the explicit admission: "the stylistic order, the connection of the sentences, and sometimes the choice of words as well are mine." The notorious sentence reads in German: "*es ist der Gang Gottes in der Welt, dass der Staat ist.*" The word *dass*, of course, is neither the same gender as *Gang* nor any pronoun at all; and the sentence fragment means merely that it is the way of God with this world that there should be the State—i.e., the State is not an accident, and we must seek to understand its "reason" (in a double sense) which Hegel finds in its being a prerequisite of art, religion, and philosophy. Thus Hegel begins his discussion of the State with the definition, "The State is the actuality of the ethical idea" (§257)—this idea being freedom, i.e., the positive and constructive freedom which culminates in art, religion, and philosophy, while depending on techniques, traditions, and education which, according to Hegel, can be maintained only in the State.

⁹ Cf. Löwith, *Von Hegel bis Nietzsche* (1941), 95 f.

Nietzsche's personal attacks. They are prompted by the same reasons which led him to oppose systems.

Kant as well as Hegel and Schopenhauer—the skeptical attitude as well as the historical and pessimistic—have a *moral* origin. I saw no one who had ventured a *critique of moral value-feelings*. . . . How is Spinoza's position explainable, his . . . rejection of moral value judgments? (It was *one* consequence of his theodicy!) (WP 410).

The point is as much *ad hominem*, but also as significant methodologically, as the claim that Kant rationalized his personal psychological inclination (WP 424) and that he invented the transcendent world to leave a place for moral freedom (WP 578). Error is spread unnecessarily when moral doctrines, which are vitiated by personal bias or a compromise with State or Church, are allowed to become the basis for metaphysical or epistemological considerations. That this, however, has been the case in almost all philosophies up to now, Nietzsche never tires of insisting (e.g., BGE 6; WP 413, 428).

One may question Nietzsche's assumption that Kant assumed the possibility of synthetic judgments *a priori* only because he took the moral law for granted *a priori*: while there are passages even in his first *Critique* in which Kant himself suggests that his theory of knowledge was inspired by a moral purpose,¹⁰ Kant also thought of mathematics as presenting us with synthetic judgments *a priori*. He did, however, carry to extremes the solving of problems by reference to conceptual analogies, parallels, and symmetries. One might therefore raise the Nietzschean objection precisely against the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment* which seem indeed unnecessarily vitiated by forcible parallels to the first *Critique*. Reading them, one often feels that Kant abandoned a rigorously questioning attitude and an analysis of actual experience for the sake of symmetry and repetition of the neat schemes of his *Critique of Pure Reason*.¹¹ We may be far more readily inclined to forgive Kant's belief that mathematics contains synthetic judgments *a priori* than we would be to pardon his failure to question or discuss his assumption that

¹⁰ E.g., 2nd ed., xxvii ff., 825 ff.

¹¹ The classical, very detailed and well documented, account of the vitiation of Kant's thought by the desire for symmetry is given in Schopenhauer's *Kritik der Kantischen Philosophie*. (Appendix of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* 1.)

there is an *a priori* "moral law." If this assumption can be established by cogent argument, Kant certainly did not show this.

If some light has been shed on Nietzsche's opposition to any rationalization of current valuations, the question remains what alternative he would offer instead. It is at this point that he is often taken to have presented himself as the legislating "prophet" and revaluer of values. Fortunately, we do not have to rely on the stylistic peculiarities of *Zarathustra* to settle this point, for Nietzsche furnishes us with quite explicit statements about the meaning of his "revaluation."

In *Beyond Good and Evil*—the first book he published after *Zarathustra* to explain its often obscure suggestions—Nietzsche argues at some length that we should distinguish "philosophic laborers" from philosophers proper. The laborers' "tremendous and wonderful task, in whose service every subtle pride, every tough will, can surely find satisfaction," consists in compressing into formulas former "value-creations that have become dominant and are for a time called 'truths.'" Thus previous valuations can be more readily surveyed. The task is important, and those who dedicate themselves to it are to follow "the noble model of Kant and Hegel." The real philosopher, however, has another task. He, too, must stand at one time on all the steps "on which his servants, the . . . laborers of philosophy . . . must remain standing." For that matter, however, he must also be a "poet and collector and traveler . . . moralist and seer and 'free spirit' and almost everything to traverse the range of human values and value-feelings and *to be able* to look with sundry eyes and consciences" at all valuations. All these are only "preliminary conditions of his task." "*Genuine philosophers, however, are . . . legislators*" (BGE 211). This may seem to be an unequivocal statement of Nietzsche's conviction that men like Kant and Hegel were merely his "servants" and "laborers," while he himself had a task even far nobler than theirs: value-legislation. Any such construction, however, would have to be based on a complete disregard for the further development of the argument. The aphorism concludes: "Are there such philosophers today? Have there been such philosophers yet? *Must* there not be such philosophers?" The next aphorism answers these questions; for *Beyond Good and Evil* is much more continuous than its aphoristic form would indicate. Thus the argument in question is continued with the assertion

that such philosophers have not existed so far and do not exist yet.

Nietzsche then develops his conception of the utmost that philosophers have achieved to date and can achieve now. For that reason, this particular aphorism (BGE 212) is of unique importance. The model philosopher is pictured as a physician who applies the knife of his thought "vivisectionally to the very virtues of the time." As a paragon of such a philosopher Nietzsche pictures Socrates whom he would emulate by uncovering "how much hypocrisy, comfortableness," and lack of self-discipline is really "hidden under the best honored type of contemporary morality."¹²

Nietzsche's conception of his own relationship to the legislating philosophers is expressed quite clearly in an earlier aphorism of the same work where he speaks of himself as a "herald and precursor" of "the philosophers of the future" (BGE 44). Instead of rationalizing current valuations which appear to him as previous "value creations that have become dominant and are, for a time, called 'truths,'" he offers a critique and thus prepares the ground for a new "value-creation" or "value-legislation" in the future.

Now it may be asked: if Nietzsche thus criticizes and helps to destroy prevalent values, does he not hasten the advent of nihilism? does he not seek to shatter our faith in God before he adds his "woe is us"? does he not help to bring about that catastrophic vacuum which he is prophesying? Perhaps the most precise answer to these questions is to be found in a line from *Zarathustra*: "what is falling, that one should also push!" (Z III 12). Nietzsche is not speaking of "mercy" killings of the crippled and insane, but of all values that have become hollow, all creeds out of which the faith has gone, and all that is professed only by hypocrites. The New Testament picture is that one should not pour new wine into old skins, nor put new patches on an old garment.

Traditional morality seems to Nietzsche ineluctably moribund—a dying tree that cannot be saved by grafting new fruit on it. We may recall his conception of the philosopher as a doctor—a surgeon. The health of our civilization appeared to him to be severely threatened: it looked impressively good,

¹² The importance of the ideal of the doctor for the shaping of Socrates' and Plato's conception of the ideal philosopher has been developed by Werner Jaeger, *Paideia* III (1943). Instead of recognizing Nietzsche's kindred remarks, however, Jaeger—like almost everybody else—takes for granted "Nietzsche's hatred" of Socrates (II, *passim*).

but seemed to Nietzsche thoroughly undermined—a diagnosis which, though trite today, was perhaps no mean feat in the eighteen-eighties. Under the circumstances, one could humor the patient and let him die, or put hypocrisy and flattery aside, speak up in behalf of one's diagnosis, and "apply the knife." In other words, Nietzsche believed that, to overcome nihilism, we must first of all recognize it.

III

There still remains the question what the "revaluation" amounts to, seeing that Nietzsche speaks of himself as a mere "herald and precursor." Does Nietzsche offer us new values? It would of course be easy to show that the virtues praised by him are all to be found in previous writers. In that sense, however, it would be altogether questionable whether there is novelty in the history of ideas. Hence we should change our question and ask not whether Nietzsche's wine was new, but whether it was his intention and his own conception of the "revaluation" to pour us new wine. The answer is: No.

Those who would make good their claim that our question must be answered in the affirmative have to rely on their imagination to produce Nietzsche's "new" virtues. The virtues he praises are honesty, courage—especially moral courage—generosity, politeness, and intellectual integrity. In his later writings, Nietzsche placed increasing emphasis on self-discipline and hardness—but unlike some of his critics, he knew the Stoics; he did not regard Spinoza as a sentimentalist; and he did not consider Kant's ethics one of softness. It is often charged that Nietzsche exhorted us to be ruthless against others—and up to a point that is true, although he also insisted up to the very end that to treat those who are weaker than oneself more tenderly than oneself or one's peers is "not just a courtesy of the heart,"¹³ but a "duty" (A 57). That one must occasionally be hard against others for the sake of the perfection of one's own soul—though not as hard as one must be against oneself—that is a truth which was not discovered by Nietzsche. Perhaps the command to leave one's father and mother gives symbolic expression to this insight.

The "revaluation" is then still unaccounted for. It does not mean a table of new virtues, nor an attempt to give us such

¹³ The phrase "courtesy of the heart" Nietzsche borrowed from Goethe, *Wahlverwandtschaften* (1809), II, 101: "There is a courtesy of the heart; it is related to love. It gives rise to the most comfortable courtesy of external behavior."

a table; and it is one of Nietzsche's most serious faults that, in his great loneliness, he injected into his writings elements that aroused such expectations. What he really meant by his "revaluation" was clearly nothing of the sort, as is shown by the few passages in which Nietzsche explains his conception. The notes and the finished works of 1888 present a perfectly consistent picture in this respect.

One of the most revealing characterizations of the "revaluation" occurs in *Ecce Homo*:

After the Yes-saying part of my task had been solved, the turn had come for the No-saying, *No-doing* part: the revaluation of our values so far, the great war—conjuring up a day of decision. This included the slow search for those related to me, those who, prompted by strength, would offer me their hands for *destroying* (EH-BGE 1).

In other words, the "revaluation" means a war against accepted valuations, not the creation of new ones. Later in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche elaborates:

Revaluation of all values: that is my formula for an act of ultimate self-examination by mankind which in me has become flesh and genius. My lot is that I must be the first *decent* human being, that I know myself to be in opposition against the mendaciousness of millennia (EH iv 1).

Without denying the touch of madness in the uninhibited hyperbole of Nietzsche's phrasing, one can use this statement as a clue to Nietzsche's meaning. The "revaluation" is essentially "a courageous becoming conscious" (WP 1007); in other words, the diagnosis itself is the revaluation, and this consists in nothing beyond what Socrates did: "applying the knife vivisectionally to the very *virtues of the time*" and uncovering "how much hypocrisy, comfortableness, letting oneself go and letting oneself drop, how many lies were concealed under the most honored type of their contemporary morality, how much virtue was *outlived*" (BGE 212). The "revaluation" is not a new value-legislation but a reversal of prevalent valuations—not from a new vantage point, nor arbitrary,¹⁴ but an *internal* criticism: the discovery of what Nietzsche variously refers to as "mendaciousness," "hypocrisy," and "dishonesty."

¹⁴ Almost all of Nicolai Hartmann's criticisms of Nietzsche in his famous *Ethik* (1926) depend on this misunderstanding. Of course, he is not blind to Nietzsche's merits and even suggests in the preface that the task of ethics today consists, at least to a considerable extent, in achieving a synthesis of Nietzsche and Kant. [Footnote 15 has been omitted—Ed.'s Note.]

The conception of the revaluation is characteristic of the late Nietzsche who never tires of reiterating that his "inmost nature" is "*amor fati*" (EH-CW 4), that "nothing that is may be subtracted, nothing is dispensable" (EH-BT 2), and that he "wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity" (EH II 10). The revaluation is not the accomplishment of the individual philosopher who enters the arena to tackle ancient valuations and to reverse them as a sport; rather, "the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequence" (WP Preface 4); "*the highest values devalue themselves*" (WP 2). This Nietzsche can call the revaluation—in the same note in which he defines it as "a courageous becoming conscious"—a "*saying Yes* to what has been attained" (WP 1007). On the face of it, this contradicts the passage in which Nietzsche associates the revaluation with "no-saying" (EH-BGE 1); but the contradiction is merely verbal. Thus Nietzsche himself can say: "I contradict as has never been contradicted before and am nevertheless the opposite of a no-saying spirit" (EH IV 1). In Hegelian terms, Nietzsche's attitude is positive insofar as he negates a negation—for he considers Christianity as the "revaluation of all the values of antiquity" (BGE 46). More judiciously put, he points out how our accepted morality is dying of internal inconsistencies. His No consists in the acceptance of a *fait accompli*. The philosopher only lays bare the cancerous growth.

Against this background one may also understand the title of one of Nietzsche's last works: "*Götzen-Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert.*" It is usually assumed that the hammer with which Nietzsche philosophized was a sledge hammer. As a matter of fact, he had planned to call the book *Müssiggang eines Psychologen* (The Idleness of a Psychologist) and substituted *Götzen-Dämmerung* only after the work was finished—at Gast's insistence; and the simile of the hammer is explained in the Preface:

There are more idols than realities in the world: that is my "evil eye" for this world; that is also my "evil ear." For once to pose questions here with a *hammer* and perhaps to hear as a reply that famous hollow sound . . . what a delight for one who has ears even behind his ears—for me, an old psychologist and pied piper before whom just that which would remain silent *must become outspoken*. This essay, too—the title betrays it—is above all a recreation . . . the idleness of a psychologist. . . . This little essay is a *great declaration of war*; and regarding the sounding out of idols, this time they are not just idols of the age, but *eternal* idols which are

here touched with the hammer as with a tuning fork [!]-there are altogether no older ones . . . Also none more hollow.

And this was written "on the day when the first book of the *Revaluation of All Values* was completed."

The hyperbolic epithets associated with the revaluation in *Ecce Homo* bear out our interpretation. Nietzsche speaks of "the hammer blow of historical insight (*lisez: revaluation of all values*)" (EH-HAH 6); and he calls the three inquiries which constitute the *Genealogy* "Three decisive preliminary studies by a psychologist for a revaluation of all values" (EH-GM). In other words, the *Genealogy* is now viewed as a prelude to the *Antichrist*-and Nietzsche thinks of his account of the genesis of Christianity as a "historical insight." When he speaks of "the smashing thunderbolt of the *revaluation*" (EH-CW 4), this picture of the destructive *Blitzschlag* is similarly suggested by what Nietzsche takes to be a sudden and terrifying illumination about the true nature of our traditional values-an illumination which these values cannot survive.

The revaluation is thus the alleged discovery that our morality is, *by its own standards*, poisonously immoral: that Christian love is the mimicry of impotent hatred; that most unselfishness is but a particularly vicious form of selfishness; and that *ressentiment* is at the core of our morals. . . .

Finally, Nietzsche himself clearly wanted to be a philosopher and not the founder of a new religion. His scorn for the unquestioning disciple is one of the persistent motifs of his thought. In *The Gay Science*-the work that immediately preceded *Zarathustra*-this theme is aired a great number of times, beginning with the Proem (7 and 23).

Since this side of Nietzsche's thought has been unduly neglected, it may be well to quote a few characteristic passages:

Let us remain faithful to Wagner in that which is *true* . . . in him-and especially in this that we, as his disciples, remain faithful to ourselves in that which is true . . . in us. Let him have his intellectual tempers and convulsions. . . . It does not matter that as a thinker he is so often wrong; justice and patience are not *his* strength. Enough, if his life is justified, and remains justified, before itself: this life which shouts at every one of us: "Be a man and do not follow me¹⁶-but yourself! But yourself! (GS 99).

¹⁶ Goethe added this motto in the later editions of his *Werther* because the hero's suicide had inspired many readers to follow his example.

Nietzsche recognized his self-portrait no less than we do today. He knew of his own "intellectual tempers and convulsions"; he was aware of the fact that "as a thinker he is so often wrong"; and he had no illusion that "justice and patience" were his strength. Nor did he crave slavish adherence to his pronouncements any more than he could respect such uncritical acceptance of Wagner's ideas. A few pages later we find Nietzsche's picture of the ideal disciple:

When he had said that, his disciple shouted . . . : "But I believe in your cause and consider it so strong that I shall say everything, everything that I can find in my heart to say against it." The innovator laughed . . . : "This kind of discipleship," he said then, "is the best . . ." (GS 106).

One may also cite two other passages from *The Gay Science*:

Everybody knows that to be able to accept criticism [*Widerspruch*] is a high sign of culture. Some even know that the higher man invites and provokes criticism of himself to receive a hint about his injustices which are yet unknown to him (GS 297).

A kind of intellectual integrity [*Redlichkeit*] has been alien to all founders of religions and their kind: they have never made their experiences a matter of conscience for knowledge. "What did I really experience? What happened then in me and around me? Was my reason bright enough? Was my will turned against all deceptions . . . ?"—none of them has raised such questions; all the dear religious people still do not raise such questions even now: rather they have a thirst for things that are *against reason*, and they do not want to make it too hard for themselves to satisfy it. . . . We, however, we others who thirst for reason want to look our experiences as straight in the eye as if they represented a scientific experiment . . . ! We ourselves want to be our experiments and guinea pigs [*Versuchs-Tiere*]! (GS 319).

Even so it may seem that when Nietzsche wrote *Zarathustra* a little later, he changed his mind and mood. It is undeniable that—if we are to use Nietzsche's own play on words—*Zarathustra* was not only an experiment and an attempt but also a temptation. Man often craves religious certainty in direct proportion to his profound and tormenting doubts. Like Pascal and Kierkegaard and many another, Nietzsche, too, knew the temptation to let doubt be bygone and to "leap"—as Kierkegaard himself would put it—into faith. What distinguishes Nietzsche is not that he experienced this attraction, but that he felt obliged to resist it to retain his integrity (WP 1038). He did resist it to the end and retained an open mind and

the will to hold his own "in an unfinished system with free, unlimited views" (xvi, 51 f.).

Nietzsche knew that he was, "no less than Wagner, a child of this age"; but he insisted that he had "fought against this" (CW Preface): in the pose of Zarathustra we recognize Wagner's contemporary; but when we see the far more melodramatic notes (xiv) which were not utilized in the completed version, we see how Nietzsche fought his temptation; and the final speech of the first part—which Nietzsche himself considered so important that he quoted it at length in the Preface to *Ecce Homo*—shows Nietzsche overcoming Wagner in himself and turning to Socrates:

Go away from me and resist Zarathustra. . . . Perhaps he deceived you. . . . One repays a teacher badly, if one always remains a pupil only. Why do you not pluck at my wreath?

One may agree with Nietzsche that this is not the language of prophets and founders of religions: "he does not only speak differently, he also *is* different" (EH Preface).

Even in *Zarathustra* where Nietzsche chooses the founder of a great religion to be his protagonist, and even in *Ecce Homo* where his claims of his own greatness reach their incredible climax, Nietzsche-Socrates overcomes Nietzsche-Wagner. To be sure, in *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche attempts what might be called a deliberate self-mythologization; some of his statements obviously make no claim to literal correctness; and poetic license is in places extended beyond all boundaries of reason and good taste. The mythological mask, however, that Nietzsche seeks to create for himself is not that of a prophet who establishes a new religion; it is the antithesis of Zarathustra and of the legend that his sister and her associates cultivated later while advisedly withholding *Ecce Homo*:

I want no "believers"; I think I am too sarcastic [*boshaft*] to believe in myself; I never speak to masses. I have a terrible fear that one day I will be pronounced *holy*: You will guess why I publish this book *before*; it shall prevent people from doing mischief [*Ünfug*] with me (EH iv 1).

The bombast is indeed harnessed by irony; the prophetic pathos is employed in the service of Nietzsche's proclamation that he is not a prophet; and the insane pride is based in large part on his triumph over any dogma, on his sense of a new freedom, and on his enjoyment of unprecedented wide and open vistas. A few weeks earlier, in *The Antichrist*, it had not

been a new faith that Nietzsche had pitted against Christianity, but the "gay science" of the open mind, a fanaticism for truth, and a new *skepsis* (A 54).

It may be asked whether Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo* was really designed to prevent posterity from using him to bad ends. Was it the kind of book that, if published and read earlier, might have counteracted the growth of the legend or the Nazis' later *Unfug*? If one examines the book with such questions in mind, one cannot help concluding that Nietzsche, who announced in this work "I am no man, I am dynamite" (IV 1), was honestly concerned lest this explosive might be employed in the service of the very things he had fought.

He went to extremes to counteract the potential influence of *Zarathustra*; he denounced, vehemently, those who might interpret his conception of the overman Darwinistically, though his own Zarathustrian allegories had plainly invited such misunderstanding; and he missed no opportunity to heap scorn upon German nationalistic aspirations, racism, and the irresponsible reinterpretation of past history which was even then becoming fashionable. For all its obvious and glaring faults, *Ecce Homo* repudiated in advance the forces that were later to claim Nietzsche as their own. The explicit denunciation of his sister, which one might expect to find in the book, was apparently included in the manuscript, but obliterated by her at an early date—because she then expected that he would recover from his madness, and she was eager to save *him* the embarrassment of seeing what terrible things he had written!¹⁷

The Förster-Nazi attempt to find a new religion in *Zarathustra* or a finished system in *The Will to Power* is as opposed to Nietzsche's own basic intentions as was the hallowing of his name at his funeral and the subsequent attempt to make a saint or a prophet of the new Germany out of him. We need not look at Nietzsche through the warped glasses of those whom he himself dubbed "Zarathustra's apes." The Wagnerian pose of his most famous book, its similes which have struck popular fancy and invited misunderstanding—"those were steps for me, and I have climbed up over them: to that end I had to pass over them. Yet they thought that I wanted to retire on them" (Twilight I 42).

¹⁷ Podach, *Gestalten um Nietzsche*, 201 f.

NIETZSCHE'S PERSPECTIVISM

ARTHUR DANTO

I

Nietzsche held a view of human beings in accordance with which we have, for whatever reason, evolved into creatures "so delicate, sensitive, and suffering, that we have need of the highest means of healing and consolation" (HAH 109). He is not of course referring merely to modern men, for the diagnosis applies equally to the Greeks, no less "delicate children of life" than ourselves. The evidence for this claim, he would say, is to be found in the plain and patent need, apparently felt in every age and culture, for religious and metaphysical solace and for some assurance, upon some high authority, that life is not without meaning nor we without value. How else are we to account for the pertinacity of these extraordinary systems of belief than through their power to assuage? The need itself persists, however, even after these are discredited; although he felt that we cannot any longer accept either religious or metaphysical assertions in intellectual conscience:

How gratefully we would exchange the false assertions of the priests . . . for truths which were as healing, calming, and as beneficial as these errors! Philosophy can only oppose them with metaphysical illusions (at bottom just as untruthful) (HAH 109).

Art, which may have provided a substitute soporific, fails to provide the shelter we demand for ourselves; even in its highest exemplifications art can exacerbate the metaphysical hunger of a man who thought he had put behind him all such consolations:

How strong the metaphysical need is, and how difficult nature makes our departure from it, may be seen in this, that even in the free spirit, who has cast metaphysics aside, the highest workings of art can easily sound a tone from some string which has long been mute—even if it has been torn out . . . (HAH 153).

In this way "Art makes heavy the thinker's heart." These throwbacks to one's precritical past try our intellectual integ-

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rity, and if we are to find salvation and surcease, it must derive from elsewhere than in religion, art, or metaphysics.

For a time, in what sometimes is known as his second or "Positivistic" period, Nietzsche entertained the possibility that science might answer such questions as we can meaningfully ask, and that, if through anything, "through science one really does approach the real nature of the world and a knowledge of it" (HAH 29). Moreover, he thought it at least possible that science might become an adequate substitute for the religions it replaced intellectually and the art of which it was a further development:

Can science awaken such faith in its results? In fact, science needs debate and distrust as its closest companions. Yet in time, the sum of unimpeachable truths—which is to say, those that have survived all the storms of skepticism and all reductive analyses [*Zersetzungen*—will have become so great . . . that men might decide to ground "eternal works" upon them (HAH 24).

Science, then, might give a meaning to life, and we need not, in virtue of having renounced metaphysics and religion, abandon all hope for the benefits these unquestionably provided to men. Metaphysics sought to identify solid, indubitable foundations for knowledge, detecting the ultimate "furniture" of the universe and the bases of cognition and valuation. Religion was concerned with the eternal salvation of the soul. Science, more circumspectly, through testing and trying, might yet sustain the hope of something as enduring and immutable.

He considered himself at this time to be practicing a science. With a vanity characteristic of him in every utterance about himself and his work, he called it "the greatest triumph of science" (HAH 16). This was the *science of the origins of thought*. One proposition put forward by this discipline was that religion, metaphysics, morality, and art rest on errors and originate in fear. One need not, accordingly, take seriously the claims advanced by their advocates, and one renders them sterile by showing how the problems and solutions to which they gave rise ever came about. This was a methodological device he employed constantly:

Directly the origins of religion, art, and morals have been so described that one can explain them without having recourse to metaphysical concepts either at the beginning or along the way, the strongest interest in [metaphysical problems] ceases (HAH 10).

The chief problem in philosophy, as he saw it, was not to try

to provide solutions to the questions that have divided philosophers down the ages (for which all the main positions possible are known) but rather to show how these quarrels might have arisen. Once this is clear, it no longer seems interesting or important to try to solve the problem on its own terms. To Nietzsche a philosophical problem is a question not to be answered but to be overcome; it is through science, especially the science he believed himself to have developed, that this is to be done.

This antimetaphysical, proscientific, therapeutic view of philosophy has a decidedly contemporary ring to it (i.e., the contemporary philosophy of but a few years ago), however little Nietzsche himself may have contributed to these recent attitudes. Throughout his intellectual life he remained a *soi-disant* scientist—a mixture of “historian of thought,” psychologist, and even speculative physicist. He regarded his peculiar notion of the eternal recurrence as “the most scientific of hypotheses” and believed he had found scientific support for it. The spirit of scientific investigation never ceased to impress him as uniquely favorable not only for achieving knowledge but also for furnishing an atmosphere of dryness and clarity within which a man of genuinely intellectual conscience might function:

In those who give to science only a passing glance, in the manner of women and, sadly, of most artists too, the strictness of its discipline, its inexorability in small matters as in great, its rapidity in weighing, judging, rejecting, produce a feeling of dizziness and fright. The most difficult demand, the one which especially frightens them, is that one's best is to be done without reward or distinction, but rather as among soldiers. . . . The severity of science is like the form and etiquette of the best society: it threatens the uninitiated. But he who is accustomed to it may live nowhere else save in this light, transparent, powerful, and electric air, in this *manly* air. . . . In this clear, strict element he has his power whole: here he can fly! (GS 293).

Nietzsche's volumes are filled with such sentiments. “It is the mark of a higher culture to esteem more highly the little, unapparent truths, established by strict method, than the dazzling, happifying errors, which metaphysical and artistic epochs give rise to” (HAH 3). Nevertheless, science was not immune to the corrosiveness of his analysis, and he became increasingly persuaded that science, *as well as* its cultural rivals, rested on errors, accepted (as it has to) fictions which it took for truths and metaphors which it honored as description. “One must not talk about science as the blind speak of

colors, *against* science in the manner of women and artists ('Ach! This wicked science,' sigh their instinct and modesty, 'it always gets underneath!')" (BGE 204). But, he goes on, the belief that science tells the only truths, much less tells the truth at all, is a naïveté. Indeed, as with the alternative modes of thought he supposed he might replace with science, the question became for him whether one could deny the basic propositions of science and still manage to survive. This was the problem, essentially, of viewing science "through the lens of life."

It is important to recall that in *The Birth of Tragedy* he had already spoken of religion and science as forms of art. "Metaphysics, religion, moralities, science—all of these are the offspring of the will to art, to falsehood, to flight from truth, to the denial of 'truth'" (WP Schlechta¹ p. 692). This of course was "art" in the wider sense. Science, like art (in the narrow sense), is creation or invention rather than discovery—a thesis which, whatever we might think of it, was hardly typical of the crude Baconian conception of science that for so long had been assumed to be the correct description of what science is and ought to be. It does not follow that we are to judge science aesthetically, any more than, in fact, Nietzsche was concerned to judge even art (in the narrow sense) that way. The criterion was always and only whether any of the structures which science exemplified enhanced and facilitated life. More than this, he felt, one could not claim, and more than this one should not need. To demand that science be true is to expose oneself to question whether "truth" means anything more than the facilitation of life. Nietzsche, as we shall see, advanced a pragmatic criterion of truth: *p* is true and *q* is false if *p* works and *q* does not.

Let us turn to Nietzsche's peculiar form of skepticism, which is not only central to his thought but also exceptional in the extremes to which he carried it. I but anticipate these extremities by saying that no distinction which we make, even the plainest distinction between thing and thing, has the slightest basis in reality. There are no distinctions between things because the concept of thinghood is itself already a fiction. That there are no distinctions Nietzsche would have termed a Dionysiac insight. But it would not have been an insight we could live with for very long. To attach a value to life is derivatively to attach a value to whatever makes life possible. Here

¹ K. Schlechta, ed., *Nietzsche: Werke in drei Bänden*, Munich, 1954-56.

the concept has some worth. It is important to note that this is the only criterion he would allow; whatever system of ideas fails to meet this test must be ruthlessly, if regretfully, torn away. It is always healthy, he thought, to remind ourselves that our ideas are arbitrary structurings of chaos, and the question is not whether they are true but whether we should believe them, and why. His answer was always put in psychological terms; in fact, for him every problem reduced to a problem of psychology.

II

Philosophers and plain men alike are inclined to believe that there is an objective order in the world, which is antecedent to any theories we might have about the world; and that these theories are true or false strictly according to whether they represent this order correctly. The conception of an independent and objective world structure, and the conception of truth which states that truth consists in the satisfaction of a relationship of correspondence between a sentence and a fact, are views which Nietzsche rejects. Indeed, he attached an importance to the overcoming of these views far in excess of what most philosophers—who might otherwise suppose the Correspondence Theory of Truth to be wrong, or unclear, or the belief in an objective world order to be suspect, or unjustifiable, or unwarranted by evidence—could believe this matter possibly to deserve. The typical philosopher would doubtless consider these questions to be of the most narrowly philosophical significance. But Nietzsche would take issue with them both in their contrast between a philosophical question and a common-sense one and in their implicit supposition that a philosophical theory could have no importance for the practical conduct of life.

The world of common sense in which the so-called plain man believes is a world made up of objects that are as they seem to be, are available for use and exploitation, and behave in conformity with laws so deeply embedded in the plain man's conceptual structure that he is hardly conscious of appealing to them and could not easily render them explicit. Philosophers have taken this world view more or less for granted. They have gone on to ask only whether there are in fact these objects, whether he who believes in science can accept this common-sense view, whether there might not be another world more real than this one and, if so, what connections there

might be between this one and it. In taking the common-sense world as a *fait accompli*, philosophers have adopted a special stance—"setting themselves before life and experience . . . as though before a painting which is once and for all time unrolled." But they have, Nietzsche suggests, overlooked the possibility, and the significance of recognizing the possibility, that:

This painting—which we call human life and experience—evolved gradually, and is indeed still in process of evolving—and should not therefore be regarded as a fixed quantity. . . . We have, through millennia, gazed into the world with blind inclinations, passions, and fears; with moral, religious, or aesthetic demands; and have so wallowed in the bad manners of illogical thought that the world has become amazingly variegated, fearsome, rich in spirit and meaning. It has acquired color, but we were the colorists. The human intellect has allowed the world of appearance to appear, and exported its erroneous presuppositions into reality . . . (HAH 16).

The world of common sense (impugned as the world of mere appearance by some philosophers, as the world of sheer illusion by others) is altogether the achievement of the human mind, not something, so to speak, which was found by it. "What we now call the world is the result of errors and fantasies, which, in the total development of organic being, gradually emerged and interbred with one another, and have been bequeathed to us as the accumulated treasury of the entire past" (HAH 16). So common sense is an *interpretation* (as Nietzsche will call it), not something with which interpretations contrast. It has had its origins, like any interpretation of the world, in irrational impulses, in fears and hopes and wishes, and it is to such extent indistinguishable, save in content, from any system of metaphysics. Common sense, indeed, is metaphysics made routine, just as, reminding ourselves of an earlier analysis, concepts are metaphors gone flat.

Nietzsche sustained a complicated attitude toward common sense. It was a tissue of errors and false beliefs, an interpretation only, without the slightest correspondence to reality. This sounds much like the typical philosophical repudiation of the world of sense and habit with which thinkers since Parmenides and Plato have been identified. Nietzsche goes on to say that relative to any *other* interpretation we are obliged to say that common sense is true. "Truth is that sort of error without which a particular class of living creatures could not live" (WP Schlechta p. 814).

"Truth": this means, in my way of thought, not necessarily the opposite of error but, in the most fundamental cases, only the position of different errors relative to one another. Perhaps the one is older and deeper than the other, and hence uneliminable because an organic being of our sort cannot live without it. Other errors, meanwhile, do not tyrannize over us as conditions of life . . . [and] can be laid aside or contradicted (WP Schlechta p. 915).

Any attempt to reject common sense in favor of some allegedly more adequate scheme of things will not work. Rather, any such scheme will be false if common sense is "true" and it is incompatible with common sense. But then it would be "false" only in a sense determined by Nietzsche's characterization of "truth": it would be simply a set of errors with which our kind of organic creature could not survive or, less dangerously, which we could survive without. In the interests of life and survival, we are constrained to affirm the body of beliefs which passes for common sense and reject whatever conflicts with this. We could not defend it on any other grounds, and certainly not on the basis of its truth, if we take "true" in a more conventional sense of expressing what is the case. For in *that* sense nothing is true and everything is false.

Nietzsche proclaims time and again that everything is false. He means that there is no order in the world for things to correspond to; there *is* nothing, in terms of the Correspondence Theory of Truth, to which statements can stand in the required relationship in order to be true. In this regard, common sense is false and so is any other set of propositions false. But should that other set conflict with common sense, then it is false in another regard, having to do with the conditions of existence which we have worked out for ourselves over a long period of time. Any other system is inimical to life and to us, and must be combatted. It is a mistake to say that the problem of truth is exclusively of philosophical import. It is of most *vital* significance to get it right. Many systems of thought have claimed to be true, and indeed exclusively true, to the real nature of the universe. Often, in East and in West, these systems, as part of their contention, have adopted the view that the world in which we seem to live is but a world of appearance, of illusion, of mere phenomenality; and that all of our beliefs, which are based in this seeming world and have reference to it alone, are false in any more ultimate respect. If we seek for truth, we must then turn our back on this world (so-called) in favor of another world more real, the existence and nature of which are described through the

system of thought that now demands our allegiance. This other world may be the noumenal world, the kingdom of heaven, Nirvana, Brahma, the universe of pure Forms, or what you will. Insofar as metaphysicians demand that, as a price for a different world, we turn our backs on this one, they are, Nietzsche insists, demanding that we turn our backs on life. Even though this world is made by us, and has certainly no more substance than any proposed alternative, it is the one in which we are able to live. In the interests of life we must attack these blandishing metaphysics. Nietzsche believed this to be a matter of the utmost immediate importance, which perhaps helps explain his prophetic and therapeutic fervor and tone. In themselves, philosophical problems were aberrations of the mind, insoluble and silly. Their importance lay in their threat to life; and behind each one was a will to impose its own order. As elsewhere, the strife within philosophy is a strife of will against will. Nietzsche's arguments will prove very analytical at their best, but it would represent him and his view of philosophy badly to think of him merely as an analyst.

III

It has become fashionable in recent times to defend common sense in philosophy and to reject philosophical doubts addressed toward its most entrenched beliefs. Nietzsche is not a defender of common sense in quite this way. The would-be opponents and deprecators of the categories of common sense are shown merely to have no better grounds for claiming authoritativeness than it has, while common sense itself is shown to have no basis at all in reality and not the slightest claim to truth. It is but one of a number of possible interpretations of the world, as Euclidean geometry (to use an illustration unavailable to him²) is but one of an infinite number of possible geometries. The question sometimes arises as to which of these geometries correctly describes the geometry of the physical world; a Nietzschean answer would be that not one of them does, for the world has no geometry to describe. So with philosophies, including that of common sense. There is

² Not chronologically, of course. In fact, Nietzsche read Riemann, and used the idea of a finite space as one of the "scientific" bases for his doctrine of Eternal Recurrence. But the logical implications of alternative geometries would have been clear only to someone sophisticated in the structure of axiomatic systems, and especially with the notion of the independence of axioms and the idea of models. He of course was aware of none of this.

no real world structure *of* which each of these is an interpretation, no way the world really is in contrast with our modes of interpreting it. There are *only* rival interpretations: "There are no facts [*Tatsachen*], only interpretations" (WP Schlechta p. 903). And accordingly no *world in itself* apart from some interpretation—"As though there would be a world left over once we subtracted the perspectival!" (WP Schlechta p. 705). We cannot even speak of these interpretations as "distorting" reality, for there is nothing that counts as a veridical interpretation relative to which a given interpretation could distort: or *every* interpretation is a distortion, except that there *is* nothing for it to be a distortion of. To revert to the analogy with geometries, if we *decide* that Euclidean geometry is "true," this will be because it has worked for us for a long time as an instrument in surveying, triangulation, and other metrical activities. More we cannot say: "Euclidean space is a mere idiosyncrasy of a specific kind of animal, and is only one among many others" (WP Schlechta p. 729).

The doctrine that there are no facts but only interpretations was termed *Perspectivism*. To be sure, we speak of seeing the same thing from different perspectives, and we might allow that there is no way to see the thing *save* through a perspective and, finally, that there is no one perspective which is privileged over any other. These would be logical features of the concept of perspective itself. The only difficulty here is in talking about the "same thing" on which these are distinct perspectives. Certainly we cannot say what *it* is except from one or another perspective, and we cannot speak about it as it is in itself. "We cannot establish a fact *an sich*," Nietzsche wrote in an unpublished note, "and it is perhaps nonsense [*ein Unsinn*] to wish to do so" (WP Schlechta p. 903). We can meaningfully say nothing, then, about whatever it is on which these are perspectives. We cannot speak of a true perspective, but only of the perspective that prevails. Because we cannot appeal to any fact independently of its relation to the perspective it is meant to support, we can do little more than insist on our perspective, and try, if we can, to impose it on other people. Common sense constitutes one perspective among many. And it, no less than the others, seeks to impose itself where it can: it is the metaphysics of the masses or, as Nietzsche will say, of the *herd*.

We cannot speak of a perspective, of course, without relating it to the conditions of existence of the one whose perspec-

tive it is. "The world that we have not reduced to terms of our own being, our own logic, our psychological prejudices and presuppositions, does not exist as a world at all" (WP Schlechta p. 769). Thus the world is in fact only a "relation-world: it has a different aspect from every point, its being is essentially different at every point." But one cannot say that the world is then the sum of these perspectives: "for these in any case are altogether incongruent" (WP Schlechta p. 769). This means, then, that the only world we can significantly speak of is the world from where we are. Consequently we cannot, save as an abstract possibility, speak significantly of another world, and certainly not of one that could be intelligible to us, given the conditions under which we have evolved this one.

It is true that there might be a metaphysical world; the absolute possibility of this is hardly to be disputed. . . . But one can do very little with this bare possibility, much less hang happiness, salvation, and life from so slender a thread. For concerning the metaphysical world nothing could be said except that it would be a different world, but an inaccessible and incomprehensible one. Even should the existence of such a world be proven, this would be still the most irrelevant knowledge of all (HAH 9).

Our perspective, which is common sense, has grown up over time and is not to be lightly set aside "for our whole humanity depends upon it" (HAH 16). Through science it may be refined here and there, but only slightly, and the chances are that "we can never break the strength of these primitive habits of thinking." All we are able to do is explain how they may have arisen and go on affirming them anyway, knowing their ancestry and falsity, realizing that "errors regarding life are necessary for life" (HAH 33). Nothing alternative to this, even if possible (there must be other possible perspectives; it makes no sense to speak of "the only perspective") could be viable, at least not for us, constituted as we are. Ours, if a fiction, is a useful and necessary one. One apparently can oppose it only with other fictions which would be superfluous or malignant. Still, there remains the possibility—a dangerous one—that if we were differently constituted, a different perspective might be ours. Philosophers had heretofore turned away from common sense, but in a spirit abnegative toward life. Would it be possible—and this was a main question in Nietzsche's philosophy—to turn away from common sense and the perspective of the herd though in the *name* of life? Can we,

having once seen all perspectives as false, including any we ourselves might impose, still go on inquiring?

Recalling that *tragic* suffering is due to the perception that life is devoid of meaning and that the world is only emptiness, Nietzsche asked:

Does our philosophy not verge upon tragedy? Does not [our] truth become hostile to life and to betterment? A question seems to weigh upon our tongue and not wish to make itself heard: whether one can consciously remain in falsehood. Or, if one must, whether death might not be preferable. . . . The whole of human life is sunk deep in falsehood. The individual cannot draw it up out of this pit without becoming angry with his past for the deepest reasons; without finding his present motives, such as honor, absurd; and without opposing, with scorn and disdain, the feelings which press toward future happiness. Does there really remain only one way of thinking open to us, one which entails despair as a personal result, and a philosophy of dissolution as a theoretical one? (HAH 34).

He thought not. He thought it would be possible to face the emptiness without succumbing to it, and his philosophy is an attempt to show how this is to be achieved. It would be premature to try to say what his entire philosophy endeavors to express; for the moment it is enough to see the complicated polemic situation in which his queries seemed to place him. He had at once to criticize common sense (the philosophy of the herd) and to defend it against all the traditional philosophical and religious criticisms. This is one reason why his writing is difficult for the casual reader to follow. He wants to know where Nietzsche stands, and to this a simple answer cannot be given.

But other things are also likely to puzzle the reader. There seems somehow to be a basic inconsistency in Nietzsche's use of the word "truth." He writes, for example, "There is no pre-established harmony between the pursuit of truth and the welfare of mankind" (HAH 517). But "truth" had been defined specifically in terms of what was useful to the welfare of mankind. Since Nietzsche opposes the harmful and the useful, *Nutzen und Nachteil* (HAH, cf. U₂), what is false is what is harmful if the useful is what is true. One can call common sense into question not in the name of truth but in the name of falsehood, unless one has in mind a different sense of "truth." Nietzsche actually did not keep apart the use of "true" or "truth," for which his own theory of truth specified the rules, and a more ordinary sense of these terms which enabled

him to speak from an extraperspectival standpoint *about* perspectives, declaring all of them false. Although he had developed a pragmatic theory of truth, he often spoke in an idiom more congenial to the *Correspondence* Theory of Truth which he was trying, not always and perhaps not ever in the awareness that he was doing so, to overcome. The inconsistency is not in his thought so much as in his language. Like many innovators, he was not quite sure of the theory he invented, or perhaps that he had even invented a new theory. So the reader finds odd dissonances in his writing, somewhat like architectural disharmonies in a transitional church, where the style being groped toward has not yet emerged, and the architect might not even be sure that he is groping toward a new style at all.

This leads us to a further difficulty. Nietzsche's is a philosophy of Nihilism, insisting that there is no order and a fortiori no moral order in the world. Yet he sometimes wants to be saying what the world is like. The world is made up of points of origin for perspectives. He goes still further and sees these points as occupied by active powers, wills, each seeking to organize the world from its perspective, each locked in combat with the rest. This is the beginning of his notorious and utterly misunderstood doctrine of Will-to-Power. In the end, then, he too has his metaphysics and his theory as to what its structure and composition ultimately must be. If Nihilism depends in any logical way upon this view, then Nihilism is false or, if it is true, it entails the falsity of its own presuppositions and cannot be seriously asserted. There is a crucial tension throughout Nietzsche, between a free-wheeling critic, always prepared to shift ground in attacking metaphysics, and a metaphysical philosopher seeking to provide a basis for his repudiation of any such enterprise as he is practicing. Does Perspectivism entail that Perspectivism itself is but a perspective, so that the truth of this doctrine entails that it is false? Would this be what he spoke of in *The Birth of Tragedy* as logic turning round on itself and biting its own tail? Or is this only a seeming paradox, soluble somehow or other? I do not believe Nietzsche ever worked it out, although I am convinced he was aware of it. At the end of this study I shall try to suggest the outlines for dissolving the problem, if there can be any dissolution at all. But here it is enough only to suggest that there is a twofold sense of metaphysics, just as there is a double sense of truth and a narrow and a wide sense of art. Many of Nietzsche's more infuriating paradoxical utterances can be

clarified if we recognize his shifts in the use of a term. When he uses the term "metaphysics" he often has in mind only a philosophy that speaks of a reality which is higher and purer than the one we are seemingly acquainted with through the senses. His critique of such philosophies is worth considering in some detail.

IV

Although he is often classed as an antirationalist, Nietzsche in fact opposes reason only when reason is opposed to life, or to whatever makes life possible. Like Hume, he considers that reason is or ought to be the slave of passion, even though rational structures have as one of their functions the transformation and sublimation of passions which, were they given complete license, would lead to barbarism. Philosophers, who have enjoined a life of reason, have often seen the body as the captive place for our higher faculties seeking release, and the passions as distractions from a higher vocation. Depreciation of the body motivates depreciation of the senses, and the opposition between sense and reason has its origin in this distrust. Such *theories* of reason, not reason as such, are the target for Nietzsche's antirational attacks.

Consider, for example, the slighting attitude taken toward the senses by the Eleatic philosophers or by Plato. The Eleatics were persuaded that reason informs us of certain truths which are altogether contrary to what sense experience shows. But it is self-contradictory to deny a *rational* truth. Sense, opposed then to rational truth, must be inconsistent. But no rational person would affirm an inconsistent proposition. Hence no rational person can accept propositions based on the senses. Plato notoriously propounded the thesis that the senses at best reveal a secondary order of reality. They give us grounds for beliefs only, but never knowledge—for knowledge can be only of what is truly real. Whatever strengthens or flatters the senses holds us captive amid appearances and unreality. Philosophers down the ages have acquiesced in this deprecation. Descartes dismisses all beliefs based on sense experience as corrupt at the source and seeks, instead, for some intuitable propositions, clearly and distinctly understood and known to be true solely by virtue of being so understood. Even empiricists, who denied that we had access to any truths *not* based on sense experience, were sufficiently in the shadow of the rationalistic tradition to take a dim, skeptical view of the scant, uncertain

knowledge afforded us only by the senses. Empirical propositions were deprecated, even by empiricists, by applying to them criteria which have proper application only to rational propositions, and which empirical ones can only fail to satisfy.

Nietzsche's views on sense experience, and the manner of his empiricism, will appear as we go along. He was certainly never an empiricist in any reductive sense of that term, but he was convinced that reason could not seriously be accepted should it propose theses contrary to the senses' evidence—even though the relationship between our beliefs and sense experience is a complicated one. This was his attitude throughout, and not merely in his so-called positivistic phase. In the *Twilight of the Idols*, one of his last and best books, he writes: "We possess science today strictly insofar as we have decided to accept the testimony of the senses—to the extent that we sharpen, arm, and learn to think through them." He continues: "The rest is miscarriage and not-yet-science. I mean metaphysics, theology, psychology, and theory of knowledge. *Or else*: formal science, sign-theories: like logic and that applied logic, mathematics" (Twilight III 3).

This is a singular passage in many respects. It is a banality, among those who speak diagnostically about contemporary culture, to see two dominant philosophical trends in the present world—an irrationalistic one, represented in Existentialism, and a rationalistic one, represented in Logical Positivism and its outgrowths. I shall not concern myself with this characterization, however out of sympathy I am with those who suppose that it says something important or even true. I want only to emphasize that Nietzsche, who is so naturally taken as a predecessor of the irrationalistic tendency in contemporary philosophy, in his own writings exhibits attitudes toward the main problems of philosophy which are almost wholly in the spirit of Logical Positivism. To begin, there is a policy throughout his books to undermine rather than to refute philosophical claims, his point being that to refute one is often to accept another, when it is the *whole problem* together with its array of "solutions" which must be extirpated. This radical attitude anticipates the Positivistic dictum that the utterances of philosophers are neither true nor false but "nonsense," and the perennial problems which have exercised them are only "pseudo problems." Nietzsche says, concerning his own procedures and methods, that he puts metaphysical teachings "on ice": "One error after another is laid calmly on the ice—the Ideal is not refuted, it is frozen . . ." (EH-HAH). Second,

Nietzsche employs here (though it would be an exaggeration to say that he always does so) the same criterion of meaningfulness famously advocated by the later Positivists. They contended that those propositions are meaningful which fall into one of two classes: propositions verifiable through sense experience, and propositions certifiably true (or false) by virtue of their meaning alone. Any sentence which is of neither class is "meaningless," and metaphysical propositions are in this last class. Nietzsche holds such a view of metaphysics, at least insofar as the latter pretends to furnish us with positive and even profound knowledge of the world. It is strictly nonsense: "The *Ding an sich* is worth a Homeric laugh, since it *seems* to be so much, to be *everything*, when really it is empty—empty of meaning" (HAH 20). But it is not enough, for him at least, to be content with showing metaphysics to be senseless: this is just a first step. That there should be metaphysics at all is something which requires explanation.

Nietzsche's affinities to analytical philosophy (and not merely the parochial theories of meaning in Positivism) are nowhere more evident than in his preoccupation with language. Common sense is after all expressed in ordinary language; in speaking the language we have learned from infancy, we are implicitly prescribing how the world is to be viewed and comprehended: "Every word is a preconceived judgment" (W&S 55). Through our speech we perpetuate errors of a philosophical order. Bertrand Russell once spoke of ordinary language as embodying the metaphysics of the New Stone Age. He contended that if we are to seek a more adequate philosophy, we must work out a new language, one which does not commit us from the start to judgments we are unaware of making. If philosophers have become more reluctant today to criticize ordinary language in just these revisionist terms, they are at least prepared to suppose that there is a philosophy (even the correct philosophy) embedded in the language we employ; some philosophers go further by saying that such philosophical problems as there are arise through deviations from the correct employment of words in specified contexts. It would of course be a distortion to suggest that Nietzsche anticipated the discussions which have so dominated philosophy in recent years. But he is unquestionably a predecessor. We shall see problem after problem attacked by him through reference to what he identified as misleading modes of expression—which happen to be the modes of expression everywhere employed. It seemed clear to him that men are seduced by the grammar

of the language they speak, and implicitly believe they are describing the world when, in fact, the world as they conceive it is only a reflection of the structure of their tongue. "There lies hidden in language," he writes, "a philosophical mythology which breaks out at every moment, however careful one might be" (W&S 11). In a long passage, "Language as a Presumptive Science," he continues:

The importance of language for the development of culture lies in this, that through language men erect a world of their own alongside the real world, a position they hold to be so fixed that from it they hope to hoist the other world off its hinges and make themselves master of it. . . . Man really thought that in language he had knowledge of the world. The language-maker was not modest enough to realize that he had only given designations to things. Instead, he believed that he had expressed through words the highest knowledge of things (HAH 11).

In general, whenever primitive man laid down a word, there he believed himself to have made a discovery. How different it really was! He had hit upon a problem, and thinking he had solved it, he in fact only raised an obstacle to its solution. And now, with every piece of knowledge one must stumble over stone-hard, everlasting words—and one would rather break a bone than a word (Dawn 47).

Although Nietzsche felt that men were beginning to recognize, if only dimly, that they "had propagated an immense error" (HAH 11) in taking language literally, he also suggested, characteristically, that "happily it is too late to reverse the development of reason, which rests upon this error" (HAH 11). It is fortunate because of the role that language has played in the economy of human survival (we are what we are because we think and speak as we do): "Error has made men out of animals" (HAH 519).

The specific role of language in the development of philosophy may be seen in the interconnectedness of philosophical concepts. These do not develop sporadically and on their own, but, he asserts,

grow up in relationship to and in interconnection with one another, so that however suddenly and arbitrarily they seem to make their appearance in the history of thought, they nevertheless belong to a system much as do the members of the [species of] fauna in a given part of the earth. This is to be seen in the fact that the most diverse philosophers will surely fill out a definite ground-scheme of possible philosophies. A hidden something keeps them running in the same charmed circle, no matter how independent

of one another they might feel themselves to be. . . . Their thinking is less a discovering than a *recognizing*, a *recollection*, a coming home to a distant, primeval mental condition, out of which these concepts first took their growth. . . . The amazing family resemblance [*sic: Familien-Ahnlichkeit*] of all Indian, Greek, and German philosophizing is simply enough explained. Precisely where there is a linguistic relationship, it is not to be avoided that, thanks to a common philosophy of grammar—I mean thanks to the unconscious domination and guidance through the same grammatical functions—everything is prepared in advance for a similar development and order of philosophical systems. For the same reason, the way seems closed to the possibility of a different interpretation of the world (BGE 20).

It would seem to follow directly that any world view different from our own could not be expressed in any language with the same structure as ours. This will have some philosophically important consequences for Nietzsche's own thought. Meanwhile, we might underscore certain grammatico-philosophical elements of our linguistic family which impressed Nietzsche as being especially pernicious intellectually, however indispensable in practice. He sometimes wondered how men who speak in unrelated languages must construe the structure of the world.

The first element is what Nietzsche regards as virtually an inescapable tendency on our part to posit entities—to think in terms of *things*—and to regard the world as characterized by “unity, identity, permanence, substance, cause, thinghood, and being” (Twilight III 5). These notions, which are the stock in trade of conventional metaphysics, are due completely to our language:

Language, at its origin, belongs to an age of the most rudimentary form of psychology. We enter a realm of gross fetichism when we become conscious of the fundamental presuppositions of the metaphysics of language or, in plain words, of “reason.” . . . I am afraid we shall not get rid of God until we get rid of grammar (Twilight III).

Epistemologists have often been concerned with the assumption we all make spontaneously: that there are objects which continue to exist between our perceptions of them, and the existence of which does not depend upon anyone's perception. In making this assumption, common sense is asserting, implicitly, a philosophical proposition of the most audacious sort. Again, we spontaneously subscribe to the old doctrine of substances insofar as we think, or speak, of something “being the

same" despite undergoing changes. We do not suppose that we are referring to different things when we say at one moment that something is green and sometime later say that it is yellow. We think, rather, that it is the very same thing which exists, *itself* unchanged, which is now one color and now another. We scarcely can help construing the world as made of permanent objects which are the subjects of change: "every word and sentence we utter speaks in its favor" (Twilight III). Nietzsche wishes to say that we are wrong, "There are no things: that is our fiction" (WP Schlechta p. 776).

This is not a fiction we could readily get along without, either in daily life or in science, the latter being a refinement of common sense in Nietzsche's view. "We operate with things which do not exist: with lines, surfaces, bodies, divisible times and spaces" (GS 112). These concepts have a *use*. But they do not denote anything in the world; accordingly, sentences which make an essential use of them are not true because there is nothing for them to be true *about*. Such sentences, therefore, have no explanatory value, as Nietzsche uses the term "explanation"; that is, they are interpretations rather than genuine accounts of the world: "It has begun to dawn upon five or six persons that physics, too, is only an interpretation of the world and an arrangement of it (to suit ourselves, if I may say so!)—and not an explanation of it [though] it is taken as an explanation" (BGE 14).³ The concept of the atom, for example, involves an essential reference to something that does not exist: "In order to comprehend the world, we have to be able to calculate; in order to be able to calculate, we require constant causes. But since no constant causes are to be found in reality, we invent some for ourselves, e.g., the atom. This is the origin of atomism" (WP Schlechta p. 896).

It is tempting to speculate that what Nietzsche has in mind here is what philosophers of science today discuss as "theoretical entities"—entities postulated by certain terms which play a highly systematizing role in the theories utilizing them, but which, if they denote any entities at all, denote unobservable ones. A much-debated question is whether these terms may be eliminated in favor of a purely observational vocabulary. The

³ The opposition is between *eine Welt-Auslegung und -Zurechtslegung*, on the one hand, and *eine Welt-Erklärung* on the other. This same passage, from *Beyond Good and Evil*, has a complicated reference to sense evidence, which I refer to later. The distinction between "interpretation" and "explanation" is obvious enough, and it is found throughout Nietzsche in one way or another. See, for example, *Dawn*, p. 428.

details of this issue are beyond the scope of this volume, but perhaps it will serve to locate Nietzsche's attitude on this point to say that he has in mind a far more sweeping thesis than the one which holds that theoretical entities, as defined in recent discussion, are fictions. Rather, *all* entities are in that sense theoretical, and any such reference to concrete particulars is fictive:

We have arranged a world for ourselves in which we might live, with the accepting of bodies, lines, surfaces, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content. Without these articles of faith, no one now would be able to live! But this hardly constitutes a proof. Life is no argument. Among the conditions of life, error might be one (GS 121).

These "articles of faith" are part and parcel of the structure of our thought, from its most practical to its most theoretical employment, in daily life and in science. Owing their origin to a primitive psychology, woven into the grammatical fabric of our language, "they have been inherited to become, finally, almost the condition of the human species" (GS 110). Granting the empiricist thesis that reliance upon the senses is indispensable for knowledge, knowledge must be understood instrumentally, and we cannot truly accept the simple empiricist account of how our knowledge develops. "So much by way of retort," Nietzsche adds at the end of a discussion of language in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "to Locke's superficiality with regard to the origin of our ideas" (BGE 20). He does not, however, wholly endorse the Kantian revision of empiricism which holds that there are some propositions, not derivable from experience, which nevertheless are genuinely cognitive, and these—the synthetic a priori judgments—are inherent in the structure of the human mind, which could not operate intelligibly without them. Nietzsche concedes that *we* could not indeed think other than in conformity with them, given the manner in which we have developed:

It is time to replace the question of "How are synthetic a priori judgments possible?" with "Why is the belief in such judgments necessary?" We must understand that such judgments must be believed true, however false they are in nature, just in order that beings of our sort may be preserved. . . . We have no [other] right to them: on our lips they are plain falsehoods. But the belief in their truth is necessary as a foreground belief . . . belonging to the perspective optics of life (BGE 11).

Nietzsche surmises that "innumerably many beings, who reasoned differently from us, have perished. Yet *they* might have been closer to the truth" (GS 111). What he has in mind is something like this. Consider the generalization that all *A*'s are *B*'s. Unless an individual were sufficiently gross in his discriminations, so as to be able to overlook differences between things which he then regards as effectively the *same*, he could never have arrived at such generalizations. These indeed require abstraction. Nevertheless, he might have perceived each thing as it is (assuming that there are things), and so have been "closer to the truth." Yet to the degree in which his sensitivity inhibits his power to generalize, his chances for survival over his coarser fellows are poorer. *Their* inductive successes would be all the greater in proportion to their capacity to disregard individual differences. "Every hesitancy in drawing inferences, every propensity to skepticism, is already a great danger to life" (GS 111).

This of course is a weird argument. Rationality depends upon our capacity for abstract thinking, and certainly there would be scant likelihood for survival should we actually perceive the world as sheer, undifferentiated flux. We are obliged "to invent signs and formulas, with the help of which we may reduce the swirling complexity to a purposeful, useful scheme" (WP Schlechta p. 727). Nevertheless, this general conceptual scheme is a tissue "of lies and frauds" (Dawn 117), taken (necessarily) as true. "What are mankind's truths? They are the *irrefutable* errors of man" (GS 265). All our most fundamental concepts must be regarded merely as lucky hits in the struggle for life and power:

Through immense stretches of time, the intellect produced only errors. Some of these proved useful and preservative of the species. Whoever hit upon or inherited these fought the fight for himself and his descendants with greater success (GS 110).

V

Nietzsche does not weary of making sly points about the unreasonableness of reason, arguing, tongue in cheek, and by appealing to the principle of *a minori ad majus*, that the universe can hardly be very rational if the part of it consisting of *human* reason is as unreasonable as it is (W&S 2). His more serious philosophical point is that we are going to find the universe rational, or logical, only to the extent that we have made

it so through imposition: "The world appears to us logical, because *we* first *logicized* it" (WP Schlechta p. 526). As for logic itself, and mathematics (which he spoke of as applied logic), this too, for all its alleged purity, arose psychologically and has no basis in fact. This of course is hardly a dashing thing to say about logic, although the psychologism that underlies it would doubtless be contested today. But Nietzsche means to argue somewhat as follows: If there are no things, a fortiori there are no things which are equal to one another or identical with themselves. Yet the relations of equality and self-identity are essential in the elaboration of logical systems. When applied to the world, these systems virtually demand that what we apply them to should be entities, each of which is self-identical, and some of which may be equal to one another. Men then are misled into thinking there *are* such things. But, once again, this is not an unfortunate thing. If it were first known to men that there are "no precisely straight lines, no real circles, no metrics," then "mathematics would never have arisen" (HAH 11).

Philosophers, however, should know better:

Instead of seeing logic and the categories of reason as means for the purpose of arranging the world for our own use (thus "in principle" as useful falsehoods), it [philosophy] sees them as touchstones of truth, and believes it has to do with reality. In fact the criterion of truth is merely the biological utility of such a system of "in principle" falsehoods. . . . The naïveté consists in taking an anthropocentric idiosyncrasy as the measure of things, as a guide to the "real" and the "unreal" (WP Schlechta p. 726).

It is not this alone, however, that Nietzsche charges against the philosophers. It is that philosophy turns back *against* the common-sense world in the name of concepts which are presupposed by the world of common sense—and then declares the latter to be illusory. After declaring as real only what has "unity, identity, permanence, etc.," philosophy rejects the things of common sense—the "world of appearance"—because they fail to exhibit these traits. But in fact the very things repudiated are projections of the categorical traits they are said not to exemplify. Metaphysics has repudiated the common-sense world on its own terms, by erecting a supernumerary world which is only the conceptual skeleton of the world to which it is said to be superior and more real. Once this is seen, the notion of the "true world"—as distinct from the "apparent world"—is revealed as a *useless* and self-stultifying fic-

tion. Because it is superfluous and useless "[it is] therefore a refuted idea. Let's get rid of it!" (Twilight iv).

Once quit of the so-called "real world" we have nothing against which to contrast the "apparent world"; as the latter expression derives its only significance through a spurious contrast, it too is a spurious expression. "With the true world we have gotten rid of the apparent world too" (Twilight iv). The only remaining problem is to see what motivates philosophers to turn against common sense, and this would take us ahead of our story.

Perhaps I should add a few words about a further and somewhat different contrast which is sometimes made between the so-called common-sense and the so-called *scientific* pictures of the world. Nietzsche was much concerned with this.

Many men, not only metaphysicians, have questioned the world as conceived of by common sense. Since Galileo, if not long before, it has been customary for scientists, whose discoveries sometimes conflict with the findings of plain men (by the "unaided senses"), to dismiss these findings as having to give way before an allegedly more justifiable conception. The heliocentric theory, the theory of evolution, psychoanalytical theory, the concept of the curvature of space, the fourth dimension, the electronic theory of matter—each one, in some way, seemed simply to dissolve before our eyes certain conceptions which at one time would have been thought to be unsusceptible to challenge. The scientists of the seventeenth century went so far as to maintain that the crucial predicates in the language of science (as we would speak of it today) are in no sense observation predicates. Rather, they are terms which have reference to "primary qualities" of objects. These terms require no explanation, even if they could be explained (as they allegedly could not) in terms of observation predicates. The "secondary qualities," expressed in observational language, were stigmatized as "unreal" in contrast with the primary qualities of the world. So, as Nietzsche puts it, "The physicists believe in a 'true world' after their own manner" (WP Schlechta p. 704).

That some of our concepts should have collapsed in the light of science would hardly have dismayed Nietzsche: they all are false anyway, and essentially are subject to challenge on grounds of greater utility. Nothing is impervious to that. Nor is there anything sacrosanct about observational language, for the terms here are already structured in such a way that it would be pretense to suppose that we see what the world has

to show: we have learnt to see conformably with our language. Nietzsche, however, could not be expected to tolerate the boast that science, in repudiating common sense, has discovered the "true" world. Rather, it would have developed some useful tools and read off them, so to speak, an ontology equally suspect with that of common sense. It is just here, as a precocious philosopher of science, that Nietzsche's difference from the Positivists of our time is perhaps plainest, however sympathetic he might otherwise have been to their antimetaphysical animus. Science is not a summary of sense observations but a creative organization of the world, an arrangement which stands to observation in complicated ways.

The Pole Boscovich has proved to be, along with the Pole Copernicus,⁴ the greatest and most successful enemy of "what meets the eye" [*die Augenschein*]. Whereas Copernicus had to persuade us to believe, contrary to all our senses, that the earth did *not* stand still, Boscovich taught us to disavow the final "fixed" thing in regard to the earth—the belief in "substance," in "matter," in the little residual earthly clot—the atom. This was the greatest triumph over the senses that was ever achieved on earth. One must go further and give up the *need* for atomism . . . (BGE 12).

The physicist is not philosophically abreast of his own theories and discoveries. He is likely to suppose that the atomic structure of matter is just a statement (if not *the* statement) of how the world really is, having nothing whatever to do with *us*, with the way *we* think. But in fact the need to posit entities is *wholly* a matter of how we think:

The atom, which [the physicists] posit, is inferred in accordance with the logic of consciousness-perspectivism [*Bewusstseins-Perspektivismus*]⁵—and is thus itself a subjective fiction. The world picture which they project is through and through indistinguishable in essential respects from the subjective world-picture. It is but construction by thinking through the senses, but they are *our* senses (WP Schlechta p. 705).

The structure of physical thought is the structure of our ordinary thought. Because we take *things* to be real, and not mere convenient "arrangements," we naturally are going to credit scientific reference to *hidden* things as more than arrangements too. We will think of them as genuinely explana-

⁴ It must be recalled that Nietzsche prided himself on being a Pole and thus in the natural line of succession to his illustrious fellow countrymen.

tory. "Physics has our eyes and ears on its side" (BGE 12). So it is in the end somewhat disingenuous for physicists to pretend to have erected a structure which displaces common sense. Essentially, structurally, the physical "real world" is our world too, with perhaps a different mythology. In contrast with the fictions of metaphysics, those of science are useful. They contribute to human vitality and increasingly make us masters over the world—again unlike metaphysics, which is hostile to life and this world, beckoning us on to another and better one. In this regard, Nietzsche endorses science, as long as it does not credit itself with having done more than it has actually achieved. For example, discovering the truth. It has not done that. For there is none to discover.

VI

Enough has been said to make clear what must be the general outlines of Nietzsche's Perspectivism. He did not work it out with any rigor, or in great detail, but he thought it through consistently in a number of areas and applications. We are left with a good many problems (indeed most of the problems of philosophy), and to certain of these I must direct my attention before turning to some of the more elaborate discussions of aspects of his teaching. Perhaps the best way of doing this is to discuss his notions of the concept of causality, of which he offers an analysis very much like Hume's.

Hume arrived at an analysis of causality which entails that causes do not occur in nature. Rather, nature, or our experience of nature, consists in isolated events (or, more strictly, in isolated perceptions of events); *causes* simply are relations between pairs of events: "Causes" is a two-place predicate which takes classes of events for its terms. These will be classes whose members have been found constantly conjoined; and the alleged necessity of the causal relationship was analyzed away, by Hume, as purely of psychological origin and consisting solely in a habit of mind. Nietzsche's discussion is much along these lines. Even though there are very few references to Hume in his writings, he may very well, for all I know, have derived his views from Hume. There are some differences, however.

Hume felt that we did not and could not have access to the "hidden springs" which genuinely move the world, because we are separated, as it were, by an impenetrable curtain of our own experiences from the world as it really is. It is not

easy to see with what justification Hume, by his own criteria, could sensibly *talk* about objective causes. Like Nietzsche, he frequently expressed his skepticism in the language of the views he meant to attack; moreover, he seems to have taken some gloomy satisfaction in saying that we never shall penetrate to the truth of the world's causalities. Nietzsche believed, as Hume should have, that the concept of causality has no application outside our experience, so that the notion of "objective cause" must be strictly meaningless if it suggests something any different from what the word has been analyzed to mean in terms of experience. But, as so typically happened when Nietzsche wrote, he expressed his views in an objective mode by saying, simply, that there are no causes in the world.

A certain thing is each time followed by another. We, when we perceive it and wish to give it a name, call it cause and effect. What fools we are! We have but seen the image of cause and effect. And this makes it impossible for us to see a more fundamental connectedness [*Verbindung*] than constant conjunction (Dawn 121).

This is fairly straight Humean doctrine, but the following posthumous note deviates somewhat:

Causality is made by thinking *force* into sequential processes. A certain "understanding" emerges through this—we have anthropomorphized the process, made it "intelligible." [But] the intelligible is only the customary . . . (WP Schlechta p. 876).

There is no great disagreement with Hume, except, first, that the building up of our causal conceptions (not our concept of causality) is more a social than an individual process: "Hume was right about habit, but it was not merely the individual's habit" (WP Schlechta p. 501). Second, our notion of causality is rather more a projection of our own image than the quotations so far suggest; that is, we tend (he says) to think of the effect as the *purpose* of the cause. I shall take up his claim later when I discuss the perspective of psychology. Now it is important only to state Nietzsche's suggestion that with our concept of causality we are helplessly locked into our own perspective, since the causal tie is between *discrete things*, and it presupposes a generalization process he has characterized as mythopoetic.

A continuum stands before us from which we isolate a pair of fragments, just in the same way as we perceive a movement as isolated points and therefore do not properly see but infer it. . . .

There is an infinite set of processes in that abrupt second which evades us (GS 112).

The concept of causality is therefore a fiction because it logically depends upon fictions. There are no separate things to be related, and hence no true relations between isolated things. Finally, in *Beyond Good and Evil*—which we may always take as representing his maturest philosophy—he writes:

One should not mistakenly objectify [*verdinglichen*] “cause” and “effect” in the manner of the natural scientist (and whoever, like him today, thinks naturalistically). . . . One should make use of “cause” and “effect” as pure concepts only, that is to say, as conventional fictions for the purposes of designation and communication, *not* for explanation. In the *an sich* there is nothing of “causal connection,” of “necessity,” or “psychological unfreedom.” There is no following of effect after cause. No laws hold. It is *we alone* who have invented the causes, the after-one-anothers, the for-one-anothers, the relations, the constraint, the number, the law, the freedom, the ground, the purpose. And if this sign-world is thought into things, as though they were something in themselves, we conduct ourselves once again as we always have done: we think mythopoetically (BGE 21).

This is an exceedingly radical view. We are familiar enough with a train of philosophical thinking which, since Kant at least, has maintained, in much the manner of Nietzsche here, that various structural features which we think are inherent in the world are instead only our ways of thinking about the world, having no objective residency. But Nietzsche has gone further along this path than have most philosophers. Kant, after all, had maintained, perhaps to the detriment of his system, that there are things-in-themselves, outside of space and time and causality. But the *Ding an sich* is precisely a notion Nietzsche wants to “freeze,” for it leads to a debasement of the “apparent world.” To make another comparison, he is, like Spinoza, thoroughly disposed to reject the view that there is any moral order in the world, or that the distinctions between good and evil, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, have any location in the world—“order, structure, form, beauty, wisdom, all are absent: [there is] to all eternity chaos.” But he goes beyond Spinoza, who understood nature to have levels and distinctions, attributes and modes, as well as to conform to an iron logic of law and necessity. Like the *Ding an sich*, the Spinozistic notion of *substance* is frozen, it is repeatedly exposed to Nietzsche’s critical accusations of “fiction,” of “in-

vention," and, more interestingly, as a *Verdinglichung* of grammar, where the grammatical subject of our sentences is converted, through the mythopoetic working of the primitive mentality of man, into the substance of the world (GS 109).

Nevertheless, Nietzsche could not quite bring himself to the point of becoming an idealist, for whom there is no world outside the articulations of the mind. Nor could he quite become a phenomenalist, believing that whatever is finally meaningful can be expressed in terms of our own [sense] experience. He could not do this because he felt, and not so differently from either Kant or Spinoza, that there was a world which remained over, tossing blackly like the sea, chaotic relative to our distinctions and perhaps to all distinctions, but there nevertheless. To some extent he was seduced by his own arguments. Because he wanted to say that all our beliefs are false, he was constrained to introduce a world for them to be *false about*; and this *had* to be a world without distinctions, a blind, empty, structureless thereness. In fact he never surrendered this residual belief, and he came, in time, to speculate whether something after all might not be said about the real world.

If there is such a world, it should be possible, after all, to say something about it. But what language we might use to say it must tax the intellect. For the languages we have commit us spontaneously to a metaphysics of the world it is meant to describe which must be false. And we have no other language. Nor have we, finally, the security that a new language we might frame would not commit us to a metaphysics any less suspect than the one we had hoped to have overcome. Nietzsche never sought for a new language, although I believe sometimes that his frenzied employment of poetic diction, his intentionally paradoxical utterances, and his deliberately perverted use of terms might be taken in the spirit of the Zen *koan*, calculated to crack the shell which linguistic habit has erected between ourselves and reality and to expose us to open seas. The incapacity of ordinary language to express his own visions, without at the same time and through the very expression of them distorting his thoughts and locating them in a system of implications which it was (partly) the purpose of his thinking to *destroy*, explains, perhaps, why he thought his philosophy was hard to understand. Strictly, it should almost have been impossible to understand. How are we to understand a theory when the structure of our understanding is itself called into question by the theory we are asked to understand? Would it not follow from the fact that we had understood it

at all that we had misunderstood it? Because the concepts by means of which we had achieved understanding were just the wrong ones? If we are asked to understand in a new way, how are we to understand this new request? There could be no lexical bridge between our language and any that Nietzsche might frame. For then ours would be a translation of his, having the same meanings, preserving the same truths. That language would have to be learned anew, just as we have learned ours. But how it would be learned is hard to say. The act of ostension—pointing to what a word stands for—would be ruled out if there were no separable things at which to point. At best or, if you wish, at worst, Nietzsche's view of the world verges on a mystical, ineffable vision of a primal, undifferentiated *Ur-Eine*, a Dionysiac depth.

Yet if he was a mystic, it must be said of him that the motives which drove him had nothing to do with a union of himself with the object of his insight, nor had he the mystic's, or the Dionysiac's, hunger for self-obliteration. He was less interested in characterizing the world as it might be in itself than he was in bringing repeatedly, harshly, and unceasingly to our attention that what we believe about the world is all wrong, a web and meshwork of our own spinning, which we have cast upon a faceless world and then read as the world's physiognomy. He was less interested in stating what was true than in telling what was false.

But this then explains, as I have suggested, why he thought his teaching must be a dangerous one. For just to get into a position for understanding it must expose one to a certain peril. We could hardly survive in terms of it as human beings, for *our* survival is keyed to the concepts repudiated by his philosophy. Yet could we not perhaps, in some extraordinary way, survive in some other form? Need we perdure merely as human, all-too-human? Are there no other possibilities open to us? Why not try to go beyond man? Why not try to work out a different range of concepts which might liberate us from what we are? We might become something better, even though our new beliefs were no truer. One set of instruments can, after all, replace another.

We perhaps will never achieve truth in the old correspondence sense of the term. We can hardly be expected to do so if we will always require some system of concepts, and if any such system is an Apollinian imposition upon chaos. We could not in the nature of *saying*, say what was true. But, as we have seen, there was a quite distinct and liberating sense of

truth in which we could always say something truer than what we had said previously. Those sentences which are capable of carrying us conveniently over the chaos, even though they are absolutely erroneous, are true in virtue of their success. In this regard, whatever has so far worked is insofar true. But surely others can work too. There is room for system after system, for the most daring experimentations. Let us, then, experiment with truth, he would say, and see whether we are able to find a language and a philosophy better than the one we have. A new language and a new philosophy, indeed, for a whole new sort of being, because we *are* what our language has made us, serving as the instrument of survival for just the sort of creature it has made us. Truth in the *deep* sense, the sense of corresponding with reality, is perhaps not very important and possibly not at all useful: "Truth is the most impotent form of knowledge" (GS 110). Truth in the instrumental sense is crucial and exhilarating. The deep sense of truth has only a negative importance, assuring us that whatever we might believe is false. The instrumental sense is important for life, and in its name we might impose ourselves in such a way as to be transformed into fantastically more vital creatures. This was a liberating view for Nietzsche, and it made philosophy a singular adventure for him. It must be said that even in its most presumptuous phases, philosophy hardly ever claimed for itself a greater role than this.

NIETZSCHE AND NIHILISM

RICHARD SCHACHT

Was Nietzsche a nihilist? It is widely thought that he was; and Arthur Danto, in his book *Nietzsche as Philosopher*,¹ subscribes wholeheartedly to this view (unlike such earlier commentators as Jaspers, Löwith, Morgan and Kaufmann). Indeed, Danto claims that "Nihilism" is "the central concept of his philosophy" (Danto p. 22). He attributes to Nietzsche "a deep and total Nihilism" (Danto p. 31)—one which "is not an ideology but a metaphysics" (Danto p. 30). Nietzsche, he states, makes "unbridled claims in behalf of this extreme Nihilism" (Danto p. 33); and he asserts that "Nietzsche's philosophy is a sustained attempt to work out the reasons for and the consequences of Nihilism . . ." (Danto p. 34). In short, according to Danto, "Nietzsche's is a philosophy of Nihilism" (Danto p. 80).

Is Danto right? There are several ways in which one might attempt to answer this question. First, one might examine Nietzsche's own assertions about the nature of nihilism, and see whether he explicitly subscribes to it as he himself conceives it. Second, one might consider the way in which "nihilism" as a philosophical doctrine is standardly defined, and then determine whether or not the definition is applicable to Nietzsche's philosophical views. "Nihilism" in the philosophical sense of the term may be defined either as the doctrine that there is and can be no such thing as "truth" where reality is concerned, since reality is such that nothing whatsoever—except this fact—is true about it (metaphysical nihilism); or (more narrowly) as the doctrine that axiological principles have no objective basis in reality (axiological nihilism). Nietzsche might thus legitimately be termed a "nihilist" if it were the case that he subscribed to either (or both) of these doctrines. (Danto claims that he subscribes to both.)

It is my contention that, whichever way one chooses to approach the question, the answer to it is that Danto is wrong; and that Nietzsche, at least from *Zarathustra* (1883) onward,

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¹ New York, Macmillan, 1965. All references in parentheses in the text.

was not a "deep and total" nihilist, either as he himself conceives of "nihilism" (although he embraces a highly restricted form of it, *viz.*, one which consists simply in the denial of any realm of "true being" apart from this world and of any transcendently grounded system of values), or in either of the senses of the term mentioned above. I shall attempt to show this, first by considering what he himself has to say about nihilism, and then by showing that his actual views are such that the term "nihilism" cannot be applied to them in either of the philosophical senses indicated.

I

"At times," Danto says, Nietzsche "spoke of his philosophy as Nihilism" (Danto p. 22). Is this true? And is it true, moreover, that Nietzsche makes "unbridled claims in behalf of this extreme Nihilism"? (Danto p. 33) Nietzsche does say, "it is the measure of strength to what extent we can admit to ourselves, without perishing, the merely *apparent* character [of things], the necessity of lies. To this extent, nihilism, as the denial of a truthful world, of being, might be a divine way of thinking" (WP 15).² He does say that "Nihilism . . . can be a sign of strength: the spirit may have grown so strong that previous goals . . . have become incommensurate . . ." (WP 23). He does speak of "nihilism as the necessary consequence of our valuations so far" (WP 69 n.). He does say that "It could be the sign of a crucial and most essential growth . . . that the most extreme form of pessimism, genuine *nihilism*, would come into the world" (WP 112). He does say, in a note of 1887, "That I have hitherto been a thoroughgoing nihilist, I have admitted to myself only recently" (WP 25). And, in a passage intended to serve as the preface to a work he planned to entitle *The Will to Power*, he does refer to himself as "the first perfect nihilist of Europe" (WP Preface 3).

But can these passages support the weight of Danto's claims? Two facts ought to raise doubts at once. First, they are very nearly the only ones in the entire corpus of Nietzsche's writings which could be cited in direct support of these claims. And second, all of these passages are taken from Nietzsche's notebooks, which he himself never published. In his published

² Quotations from *The Will to Power* by Nietzsche translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. Copyright © 1967 by Walter Kaufmann. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc. and Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Ltd.

writings, he never refers either to himself as a "nihilist," or to his philosophy as "nihilism." In *Ecce Homo*, in which he is nothing if not candid about himself, he refers to himself not as a "nihilist" but as an "immoralist"—an expression which itself actually applies to him only in a restricted sense, since he does not repudiate all forms of morality, but rather only certain ones, associated primarily with the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Further, even in the passages cited above, he may scarcely be said to make "unbridled claims" on behalf of "extreme Nihilism." On the contrary, most of the passages either are quite tentative or are qualified by subsequent remarks. In the last passage cited, for example, after referring to himself as "the first perfect nihilist of Europe," he goes on to refer to himself as one "who, however, has even now lived through the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind, outside himself" (WP Preface 3). And he immediately proceeds to characterize the relation of his philosophy to nihilism as follows:

For one should make no mistake about the meaning of the title that this gospel of the future wants to bear, "*The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values*"—in this formulation a *countermovement* finds expression, regarding both principle and task; a movement that in some future will *take the place of* this perfect nihilism . . . (WP Preface 4, emphasis added).

Finally, in the earlier note of 1887 (WP 25), Nietzsche does not assert that he *is* a nihilist, but rather only that he has "hitherto been" one. And, while this consideration does not rule out the possibility that he *might* still have thought himself to be one, his wording provides little support for this interpretation; indeed, it would seem to weigh against it. (He does *not* say, "That I *am* a thoroughgoing nihilist. . . .")

Thus the case for the mature Nietzsche's having conceived his position as one of nihilism is weak, to say the least, even if one considers only those passages which provide the strongest support for it. It becomes completely untenable, however, when one considers the sustained critical analysis to which "nihilism" is subjected in the large body of notes which make up the first book of *The Will to Power*. It is to this analysis that I now shall turn.

Consider, first, the following remarks: "A nihilist is a man who judges of the world as it is that it ought *not* to be, and of the world as it ought to be that it does not exist" (WP 58

5A). Again: "Nihilism represents a pathological transitional stage (what is pathological is the tremendous generalization, the inference that there is no meaning at all)" (WP 13). Again: "It is in one particular interpretation, the Christian-moral one, that nihilism is rooted" (WP 1). Again: "The nihilistic movement is merely the expression of physiological decadence" (WP 38). Again: "We can abolish either our reverence [for traditional values] or ourselves. The latter constitutes nihilism" (WP 69 n.). Again:

The belief in . . . aim- and meaninglessness, is the psychologically necessary effect once the belief in God and an essentially moral order becomes untenable. Nihilism appears at that point. . . . One interpretation has collapsed; but because it was considered *the* interpretation, it now *seems as if* there were no meaning in existence at all . . . (WP 55, second emphasis added).

And from Nietzsche's published writings: "there may actually be puritanical fanatics of conscience who prefer even a certain nothing to an uncertain something to lie down on—and die. But this is nihilism and the sign of a despairing, mortally weary soul . . ." (BGE 10). Again: "Some have dared to call pity a virtue. . . . To be sure—and one should always keep this in mind—this was done by a philosophy that was nihilistic and had inscribed *negation of life* upon its shield" (A 7). Again: "Nihilism and Christianity: that rhymes, that does not only rhyme" (A 58). And finally:

This man of the future, who will redeem us not only from the hitherto reigning ideal [i.e., Christianity] but also from that which was bound to grow out of it, the great nausea, the will to nothingness, nihilism; this bell-stroke of noon and of the great decision that liberates the will again and restores its goal to the earth and his hope to man; this antichrist and antinihilist; this victor over God and nothingness—*he must come one day* (GM I 24).

In the light of these and other similar passages, it is difficult indeed to see how anyone could conclude that Nietzsche considered himself a nihilist. For in them nihilism is regarded as a phenomenon deriving from and related to other phenomena which he associates with "decadence"; and also as a danger, against which he directly and strongly reacts, and which he considers it imperative to overcome. What requires explanation is, given that these passages express his basic stance in relation to nihilism, how is one to understand those of his other remarks pertaining to nihilism which have led Danto and oth-

ers to conclude that he embraced it? In some of these remarks, he attempts to show that "the advent of nihilism" is at hand, and is indeed inevitable; and to explain why. In others, he suggests that while it may prove disastrous, its advent may also in certain circumstances be a good sign; and to this extent, he regards it positively. In neither case, however, do his remarks imply an unqualified affirmation of nihilism, which would conflict with the attitude expressed in the passages cited above.

"Nihilism," Nietzsche says, "stands at the door" (WP 1). The advent of nihilism is inevitable. What is this nihilism of which he speaks? "What does nihilism mean? *That the highest values devalue themselves*" (WP 2). "*Radical nihilism* is the conviction of [the] absolute untenability of existence when it comes to the highest values one recognizes" (WP 3). Why is the advent of nihilism held to be inevitable? Because "We have measured the value of the world according to categories that refer to a purely fictitious world" (WP 12B). When this is recognized—as it is coming to be—the world will appear valueless and meaningless to those who cannot conceive of its value and meaning in any other terms. When it is recognized that the world cannot be understood in terms of the categories which traditionally have been applied to it, those who cannot conceive of it in any other terms will despair of being able to comprehend it at all. This is only natural; indeed, according to Nietzsche, it is psychologically unavoidable. And those in question include all of us—not excepting Nietzsche himself—at least for a time. "The categories 'aim,' 'unity,' 'being' which we used to project some value into the world—we *pull out* again; so the world looks valueless" (WP 12A).

The world *looks* valueless. But that does not mean that it *is* valueless, and is essentially incomprehensible. With the collapse of our traditional world-view, a period of nihilism must follow. But that is not, for Nietzsche, the end of the line. "The universe seems to have lost value, seems 'meaningless'—but that is only a *transitional stage*" (WP 7). For it is not the intrinsic meaninglessness and incomprehensibility of the world itself that he holds to be the source of the coming nihilism. Rather, its source is held to be the collapse of an (erroneous) *interpretation* of the world: "It is in one particular interpretation, the Christian-moral one, that nihilism is rooted" (WP 1). Nietzsche goes on to observe that "the untenability of one interpretation . . . awakens the suspicion that *all* interpretations

of the world are false" (WP 1). The nihilist, after all, does not stop with a repudiation of the previously accepted interpretation of the world; he generalizes, denying the possibility of any alternative. This generalization, however, is not only not logically warranted, but is also, according to Nietzsche, "pathological"; nihilism, on his view, is not simply a transitional stage, but moreover "a pathological transitional stage (what is pathological is the tremendous generalization, the inference that there is no meaning at all)" (WP 13).

Of course, the logical illegitimacy of the generalization by itself does not serve to establish that some other interpretation of the world is in fact either possible or correct; and it remains to be seen what Nietzsche intends to propose along these lines. But it should be clear that, in his prophecy and explanation of the advent of a period of nihilism, he does not commit himself to the position that nihilism is a doctrine which is both final and correct.

Given that Nietzsche holds a period of nihilism to be inevitable following the collapse of "the Christian-moral" interpretation of the world, the question arises of his attitude toward it. The answer to this question is twofold, because his attitude toward it depends on whether it has the character of epilogue or prologue. He considers it necessary to distinguish between two types of nihilism, only one of which is transitional in a positive direction. It, however, is held not to be the "expression" of "decadence," as the other is, but rather a symptom of the fact that the fictions of the traditional world-view are no longer *needed*: "Nihilism . . . can be a sign of strength: the spirit may have grown so strong that previous goals . . . have become incommensurate . . ." (WP 23). Thus Nietzsche writes, "Nihilism: It is *ambiguous*: A. Nihilism is a sign of increased power of the spirit: as *active* nihilism. B. Nihilism as decline and recession of the power of the spirit: as *passive* nihilism" (WP 22).

Nietzsche is profoundly contemptuous of nihilism of the latter sort; as, for example, in the note, "*The perfect nihilist.*—The nihilist's eye idealizes in the direction of ugliness . . ." (WP 21). Still, it deeply worries him. He thinks of "the nihilistic catastrophe that finishes Indian culture" (WP 64); and fears that a similar fate may be in store for the West. So, for example, in the paragraph in which he speaks of "the advent of nihilism," he states, "For some time now, our whole European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe" (WP

Preface 2). And, in the Preface he added to *The Genealogy of Morals*, he says, "I understood the ever spreading morality of pity . . . as the most sinister symptom of a European culture that had itself become sinister, perhaps as its by-pass to a new Buddhism? to a Buddhism for Europeans? to—nihilism?" (GM Preface 5).

Nietzsche's attitude toward nihilism of the former sort, on the other hand, is quite different. He says, "It could be the sign of a crucial and most essential growth, of the transition to new conditions of existence, that the most extreme form of pessimism, genuine *nihilism*, would come into the world" (WP 112). For this reason, he does not view "the advent of nihilism" as an unmitigated disaster. It must come, as the traditional world-view must go, if a new world-view is to take its place; and the fact that it is coming may be due at least in part to the fact that some feel strong enough to try to do without the traditional world-view.

Still, Nietzsche considers "nihilism as the necessary consequence of our valuations so far" to be "*The danger of dangers*" (WP 69 n.). And he regards it as "the danger of dangers" because he holds that no one can do without *any* world-view indefinitely. Unless we are able to achieve a new world-view in relation to which we may orient ourselves—one which is more tenable than the traditional one—even the strongest will not be able to endure. "The time has come," he writes, "when we have to pay for having been Christians for two thousand years: we are losing the center of gravity by virtue of which we have lived; we are lost for a while" (WP 30). The question is: are we to remain lost, or can we find a *new* "center of gravity"?

Faced with the advent of nihilism, this question profoundly worried Nietzsche; and his great anxiety in the face of the former possibility was the source of the urgency with which he attempted to realize the latter. He felt it to be imperative, if at all possible, not merely to avoid "passive nihilism," but moreover to go beyond the stage of "active nihilism" which must be expected to follow the demise of the traditional world-view; "leaving it behind," in favor of "a countermovement . . . [which] will take the place of this perfect nihilism" (WP Preface 3–4). And in fact he holds not only that this *is* possible, but moreover that in his philosophy—and more specifically, in his conception of "the will to power"—this "countermovement finds expression" (Ibid.).

While Nietzsche does see something positive in one type of

nihilism, therefore, he is far from embracing it unreservedly and unconditionally. He does at times speak highly of it in *The Will to Power*—as, for example, when he says that it can take the form of a courageous denial of the existence of any “true world” apart from this one; and that “To this extent, nihilism . . . might be a divine way of thinking” (WP 15). But he qualifies his approval even as he gives it, with the words “to this extent.” A nihilism of strength compares favorably in his eyes with the blind acceptance of what he regards as the lies and deceptions associated with the traditional world-view. Further, it constitutes progress; it is a step in the right direction, in relation to the traditional world-view. But it is *only* that; *only* a “transitional stage.” Nietzsche himself does not want to stop there, with a No to traditional morals and values and a denial of traditional metaphysics; and he is anxious that *we* do not stop there either. He wants us to see that they are untenable, and that they are going to have to be abandoned, whether we like it or not. But he is just as concerned—indeed, more so—that something else should take their place. “My style,” he says, “is *affirmative*, and deals with contradiction and criticism only as a means . . .” (Twilight VIII 6).³

II

It remains to be determined, however, whether or not the affirmations Nietzsche makes are sufficient to refute the claim that he *in fact* was a nihilist. For, to be sure, it does not refute *this* claim simply to show that he did not consider himself to be one, and that he regarded his philosophy as a “counter-movement” to nihilism, which went beyond it. I shall now attempt to show that this claim too is wrong; and that Nietzsche does not hold, as Danto contends he does, that “there is nothing about reality to be said (or, about reality, there is only *that* to be said) . . .” (Danto p. 130). I shall argue that, on the contrary, he holds that there *are* positive general truths, both about the nature of reality and in the matter of value, which can be stated, and which ought to be recognized, at least by those who are strong enough to live with an awareness of them.

³ It is interesting to observe that Nietzsche’s own understanding of his work, as expressed in this passage, is directly at odds with Danto’s contention that “He was less interested in characterizing the world as it might be in itself than he was in bringing . . . to our attention that what we believe about the world is all wrong. . . . He was less interested in stating what was true than in telling what was false” (Danto, p. 98).

Nietzsche's views on these matters do entail a rejection of the basic tenets of most traditional metaphysical and axiological systems; but they are of such a nature that he could be termed a nihilist only if it were to be arbitrarily stipulated that everyone is a nihilist who is not a Platonist, a Christian, a Rationalist or an adherent of some other such traditional philosophical or religious world-view. If, on the other hand, nihilism is understood—as I believe it should be—to involve the claim that neither the world nor values are such that anything both positive and objectively true may be said about them, then Nietzsche most emphatically is *not* a nihilist. In support of this contention, I shall first consider some of his basic views about reality generally, and about man's nature; and then some of his main points concerning axiological matters.

According to Danto, "if we take 'true' in [the] conventional sense of expressing what is the case," then it is Nietzsche's position that "nothing is true and everything is false" (Danto p. 75). He takes Nietzsche to be saying that men have not discovered "the truth" about the world, not because anything has kept them from it, but rather because "there is none to discover" (Danto p. 93). Consider, however, the following passages from *Ecce Homo*: "We strive for the forbidden": in this sign my philosophy will triumph one day, for what one has forbidden so far as a matter of principle has always been—truth alone" (EH Preface 3). Again: "I was the first to *discover* the truth by being the first to experience lies as lies . . ." (EH "Why I am a Destiny" 1). Again: "the truth speaks out of me.—But my truth is *terrible*; for so far one has called *lies* truth" (EH "Destiny" 1). Again: "How much truth [can] a spirit *endure*, how much truth does it *dare*? More and more that became for me the real measure of value" (EH Preface 3; cf. WP 1041, BGE 49).

In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche also frequently speaks of "truth" in connection with both the person and the message of his Zarathustra. He refers to his work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as "born out of the innermost wealth of truth" (EH Preface 4). "Zarathustra," he says, "is more truthful than any other thinker. His doctrine, and his alone, posits truthfulness as the highest virtue; this means the opposite of the cowardice of the 'idealist' who flees from reality . . ." (EH "Destiny" 3). And he writes: "what Zarathustra wants: this type of man that he conceives, conceives reality *as it is*, being strong enough to do so . . ." (EH "Destiny" 5). Innumerable similar passages

could be cited, from this and other published works, as well as from *The Will to Power*. They clearly indicate that, far from holding that "nothing is true," Nietzsche in fact holds that there *is* such a thing as "truth"—truth about the nature of things and about man; and not only that it *may* be discovered, but moreover that it *has* been discovered, and that he himself has discovered it. But what is it that he has discovered, which he refers to repeatedly as "the truth"?

Many things, of course; but most importantly, in his eyes, one thing in particular. In the last lines of the last section of *The Will to Power*, he states his fundamental "discovery" and his most profound metaphysical "truth" as follows: "*This world is the will to power—and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing besides!*" (WP 1067). Nietzsche is by no means prepared to regard his conception of the world as "will to power" as merely one more world-interpretation alongside others—the Platonic, the Christian, the Kantian, the Hegelian, the mechanistic, etc.—which is no less but also no more ultimately valid than they are. On the contrary, he argues at length that each of the others is *false*; and he further argues at length that his is *true*. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, for example, it is set forth, not as a poetic vision, but rather as a serious hypothesis, the validity of which is to be determined by its explanatory power. "Suppose," he says,

. . . we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of *one* basic form of the will—namely, of the will to power, as *my* proposition has it; suppose all organic functions could be traced back to this will to power and one could also find in it the solution of the problem of procreation and nourishment . . . —then one would have gained the right to determine *all* efficient force univocally as—*will to power*. The world viewed from inside, the world defined and determined according to its "intelligible character"—it would be "will to power" and nothing else—(BGE 36).

In this passage the matter is stated hypothetically; but it is quite clear, from other passages in this work and elsewhere, that Nietzsche is quite convinced of the truth of his hypothesis. "Life itself," he states categorically in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "is will to power" (BGE 13, also 259). And, in *The Will to Power*: "But *what is life?* Here we need a new, more definite formulation of the concept of 'life.' My formula for it is: Life is will to power" (WP 254). All of the phenomena associated

with life, according to Nietzsche, from the "lowest" to the "highest," are to be understood in these terms. "In the case of an animal," he says, "it is possible to trace all its drives to the will to power; likewise all the functions of organic life to this one source" (WP 619; cf. also 658).

Nietzsche also extends the application of this concept beyond the phenomena associated with life. "Life," he states, "is merely a special case of the will to power" (WP 692). He refers to the "will to power" as that "in which I recognize the ultimate ground and character of all change" (WP 685). "The victorious concept 'force,'" he says, in terms of which science has come to understand all things, "still needs to be completed: an inner will must be ascribed to it, which I designate as 'will to power' . . ." (WP 619). He even goes so far as to say that "the innermost essence of being is will to power . . ." (WP 693). These and other similar passages make it clear that Nietzsche is committed to a definite if rather unorthodox metaphysical world-view; and that he intends his statements of it to be taken, not as false, but as true—and as true not merely in a relative or perspectival sense, but as true in the sense of being accurate and adequate expressions of the way the world really is.

He further holds a number of other, though related, metaphysical propositions to be true. The one for which he is perhaps best known is the proposition that all events recur eternally. Even Danto is compelled to admit that Nietzsche commits himself to the truth of his doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same events. At times, to be sure, he seems less concerned with the truth of the doctrine than with the cultivation of an affirmative attitude toward life so great that one not only could *endure* the thought of an eternal recurrence of the same series of events which has produced and is the existing world, but moreover could *desire* such a recurrence. To *will* the eternal recurrence of the same events is for Nietzsche the ultimate expression of an affirmative attitude toward life. So, for example, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, he puts forward "the ideal of the most high-spirited, alive, and world-affirming human being who has not only come to terms and learned to get along with whatever was and is, but who wants to have *what was and is* repeated into all eternity . . ." (BGE 68).⁴

⁴ Indeed, Nietzsche may initially have conceived the significance of the idea of eternal recurrence—and the idea itself—in these terms; i.e., as a

At other times, however, that with which Nietzsche is concerned is the demonstration of the *truth* of the proposition that the same series of events which has occurred must recur eternally. And that he should have both concerns is not unreasonable. After all, there is nothing self-contradictory in both maintaining the truth of a doctrine, and desiring that people should have an attitude toward life so positive that they can embrace it gladly. Indeed, once Nietzsche became convinced of the truth of the doctrine of eternal recurrence, it is only reasonable that he should have become all the more concerned with the problem of our responses to the idea of eternal recurrence, and that he should have continued to regard one's reaction to the idea as a decisive test of one's attitude toward life; for he knew, from personal experience, that the idea could appear terrible indeed. In moments of pessimism and weakness, he found the idea unendurable; while in moments of exuberance and strength, he embraced it enthusiastically. And this suggested to him both that he himself was still "human, all-too-human," and what a better man than himself would in part be like. He undoubtedly had the doctrine of eternal recurrence in mind when he wrote the passage in which he asks, "How much truth [can] a spirit *endure*, how much truth does it dare?" (EH Preface 3).

That Nietzsche does hold this doctrine to be true is clear. One of the notes in *The Will to Power* consists of an outline of a projected discussion of it, which reads, in part: "*The eternal recurrence* . . . 1. Presentation of the doctrine and its *theoretical* presuppositions and consequences. 2. Proof of the doc-

test of the nature of one's attitude toward life. Schopenhauer, in *The World as Will and Idea*, had proposed a similar test; only the result he anticipated is the exact opposite of the one Nietzsche desires. Schopenhauer suggests that one reflect upon the hard facts of life, and upon one's own experience in particular, and then ask oneself which one would choose, if offered a choice between living the same life over again and absolute annihilation; and he contends that if one is "in full possession of his faculties, he will never wish to have it to live over again, but rather than this, he will much prefer absolute annihilation" (*The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, ed. Irwin Edman, New York: Modern Library, 1956, p. 267).

Nietzsche, who was intimately acquainted with Schopenhauer's work, may initially have intended his affirmation of the idea of eternal recurrence as a response to Schopenhauer, in just the terms Schopenhauer proposes in his test; only he extends them, to include not merely the events of his own life but all events which have occurred, and to encompass a recurrence of them not merely once but infinitely many times ("eternally"), to indicate that his response to Schopenhauer's test differs from Schopenhauer's own as radically as possible.

trine" (WP 1057). He never completed, let alone published, the systematic discussion which he here contemplates; but his basic line of reasoning is indicated clearly enough in a number of other notes in *The Will to Power*. In one he states, "The law of the conservation of energy demands *eternal recurrence*" (WP 1063). In another, "Our presuppositions: no God; no purpose; finite force" (WP 595). Nietzsche does not think it necessary to argue for the first of these "presuppositions." He spells out and argues for the second as follows: "If the world had a goal, it must [already] have been reached. If there were for it some unintended final state, this also must have been reached" (WP 1062). He takes it to be obvious, however, that no such goal or final state *has* been reached. This argument itself presupposes, first, that an infinite time has preceded the present moment—a presupposition Nietzsche considers incontrovertible; and second, the third presupposition cited above—"finite force"—about which he says: "The world, as force, may not be thought of as unlimited, for it *cannot* be so thought of; we forbid ourselves the concept of an infinite force as incompatible with the concept 'force'" (WP 1062). Assuming the validity of these presuppositions, Nietzsche thus states his argument for the truth of the doctrine of eternal recurrence as follows:

If the world may be thought of as a certain definite quantity of force and as a certain definite number of centers of force—and every other representation [of it] remains indefinite and therefore useless—it follows that, in the great dice game of existence, it must pass through a calculable number of combinations. In infinite time, every possible combination would at some time or another be realized an infinite number of times. And since between every combination and its next recurrence all other possible combinations would have to take place, and each of these combinations conditions the entire sequence of combinations in the same series, a circular movement of absolutely identical series is thus demonstrated: the world as a circular movement that has already repeated itself infinitely often and plays its game *in infinitum* (WP 1066).

Now, it is by no means my intention to argue for the validity either of Nietzsche's presuppositions or of his reasoning from them; on the contrary, I would argue that several of his presuppositions are in fact questionable at best, and that his reasoning is fallacious. I would only contend that these passages clearly show him to have been convinced of the truth of the doctrine of eternal recurrence and of its demonstrability; and that this provides a further illustration of the fact that, whatever the

merit of the specific positions he takes may be, his philosophy cannot be considered *nihilistic* in the sense under consideration.

Innumerable other illustrations of this fact may be found in his extensive discussions of the many more specific phenomena to which he directs his attention, both in his published writings and in the notes which make up *The Will to Power*. I shall not develop any others at length; but perhaps it would be well to cite a few, simply in order to indicate some of the other matters about which he considers it possible to discover and state facts and truths, and to uncover and refute illusions and falsehoods. First, on life and living things: "Physiologists should think before putting down the instinct of self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being. A living thing seeks above all to *discharge* its strength—life itself is *will to power*; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *results*" (BGE 13). Again: "The influence of 'external circumstances' is overestimated by Darwin to a ridiculous extent: the essential thing in the life process is precisely the tremendous shaping, form-creating force working from within which *utilizes* and *exploits* 'external circumstances' . . ." (WP 647). And: "A *species* comes to be, a type becomes fixed and strong, through the long fight with essentially constant *unfavorable* conditions" (BGE 262). And finally:

Life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one's own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation. . . . "Exploitation" does not belong to a corrupt or imperfect society; it belongs to the *essence* of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will of life. . . . If this should be an innovation as a theory—as a reality it is the *primordial fact* of all history: people ought to be honest with themselves at least that far (BGE 259).

Next, on man: "In man *creature* and *creator* are united: in man there is material, fragment, excess, clay, dirt, nonsense, chaos; but in man there is also creator, formgiver, hammer hardness, spectator divinity, and seventh day: do you understand this contrast?" (BGE 225). And: "man is the *as yet undetermined* animal . . ." (BGE 62). Again: "I distinguish between a type of ascending life and another type of decay, disintegration, weakness" (WP 857). And: "What determines rank, sets off rank, is only quanta of power, and nothing else"

(WP 855). Again: "For it is our energy that disposes of us; and the wretched spiritual game of goals and intentions and motives is only a foreground—even though weak eyes may take them for the matter itself" (WP 995). And: "All 'purposes,' 'aims,' 'meaning' are only modes of expression and metamorphoses of one will that is inherent in all events: the will to power" (WP 675).

Further: "We think that . . . everything evil, terrible, tyrannical in man, everything in him that is kin to beasts of prey and serpents, serves the enhancement of the species 'man' as much as its opposite does. Indeed, we do not even say enough when we say only that much . . ." (BGE 44). In this connection Nietzsche says, "today's ears resist such truths" (BGE 202); and he speaks of the emergence of a new breed of "investigators and microscopists of the soul"—among whom he elsewhere numbers himself—"who have trained themselves to sacrifice all desirability to truth, *every* truth, even plain, harsh, ugly, repellent, unchristian, immoral truth.—For such truths do exist.—" (GM I 1).

When one considers passages such as these, and Nietzsche's many other substantive assertions and denials in connection with issues in philosophical psychology and the philosophy of mind, and on such matters as the nature and origin of conventional morality, religious belief, and social and political institutions, it is difficult to believe that Danto is talking about the same person, when he attributes to Nietzsche the view that, "if we take 'true' in [the] conventional sense of expressing what is the case," then "nothing is true and everything is false" (Danto p. 75). These passages make it quite evident that Nietzsche does *not* hold this view. If, therefore, a nihilist is one who takes this position, then Nietzsche clearly is not a nihilist.

At this point one might begin to wonder what possibly could have led Danto and others to attribute this position to Nietzsche. The reason would appear to be that Nietzsche does say some things which might *seem* to warrant this attribution, which commentators like Danto have seized upon and have used to support their interpretation of him. In fact, however, Nietzsche does not mean what they have taken him to mean when he says these things; and, consequently, their interpretation of him is based on a misconstrual of his actual points. For example (and most importantly, for present purposes), Nietzsche says, quite a number of times both in his published

writings and in his unpublished notes, that there is no "true world" in connection with which the term "truth" has an application (which application moreover has often been held to be its only proper philosophical one). In saying this, however, he does *not* mean that it is meaningless to speak of "reality" at all, or that nothing true can be said about it. Rather, what he means is that there is no world or reality or realm *which transcends* that in which we live, and with reference to which *this* world is unreal, illusory, a mere appearance or merely phenomenal.

Philosophers and religious thinkers throughout history, according to Nietzsche, have been led, by their distaste for the conditions of life and their longing for stability and order, to invent the idea of a world other than this one that is more conformable to their desires; and to assert that this other world is the *true* or *real* world. Further, in their hands "truth" has come to be understood in such a way that it has application only to such a world, or only under conditions which could not obtain except in such a world. And since, by traditional metaphysical and theological convention, the expressions "true world" and "truth" have become associated with this "other world," one of the ways in which Nietzsche felt it appropriate to deny the existence of such an "other world" was to assert that there is no "true world," and thus no "truth"—*in this sense*. But *only* in this sense; and the fact that Nietzsche intends his denial of the existence of a "true world" and of "truth" to be understood as subject to this restriction is to be seen in the fact that he usually either places the expressions in scare-quotes, italicizes them or else links them explicitly with such expressions as "other world," "thing-in-itself," "world of forms" and "metaphysical world" (the last mentioned referring to what is represented as "reality" in traditional metaphysical systems).

His denial of the existence of a "true world" and of "truth" in this sense, however, is by no means tantamount to the assertion that it is meaningless to speak about "reality" at all, or that there are no fundamental truths about reality which may be discovered and expressed. In *Twilight of the Idols*, for example, Nietzsche writes, "*First proposition*. The reasons for which 'this' world has been characterized as 'apparent' are the very reasons which indicate its reality; any other kind of reality is absolutely indemonstrable. *Second proposition* . . . : the 'true world' has been constructed out of contradiction to the actual world . . ." (*Twilight* III 6). And, at the

conclusion of the section which follows, entitled "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable," he states, "The true world—we have abolished. What world has remained? The apparent one perhaps? But no! *With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one*" (Twilight IV 6). That is, with the abolition of the idea of a "true world" apart from the actual world, the actual world ceases to seem merely to be an apparent world, and comes to be recognized as reality; for it was only by contrast to the fictitious other world which was regarded as the "true world" that the actual world was taken to be merely apparent.

Nietzsche recognizes that nihilism is the natural first response to the discovery that the "true world" of traditional theology and metaphysics is a mere fiction: "the untenability of one interpretation of the world, upon which a tremendous amount of energy has been lavished, awakens the suspicion that *all* interpretations are false" (WP 1). It "awakens the suspicion"—but does it *follow* that "*all* interpretations are false"? Obviously not. And, more importantly for present purposes, is it Nietzsche's conclusion that it follows? Clearly, no. In this same note, he speaks of the "rebound from 'God is truth' to the fanatical faith 'All is false'" —a "fanatical faith" which Danto seems to think Nietzsche shares, but which it should be obvious he does not, from the very way in which he refers to it. And, if that is not decisive, his attempt to establish that reality can and should be understood in terms of the concept of the "will to power" is.

In short, Nietzsche can be considered a metaphysical nihilist only if his remarks about the untenability of conceptions of the "true world" of the sort associated with traditional theology and metaphysics are taken to apply to all possible interpretations of the world, his own included; and only if he is held not to have gone beyond the nihilistic reaction which he describes as the "rebound" or natural initial response to the discovery of the untenability of these traditional conceptions and world-views. It seems to me, however, that to understand him in this way is to misunderstand him completely; and that the passages cited in this section demonstrate this conclusively.

III

To show that Nietzsche is not a metaphysical nihilist, of course, is not to show that he is not an axiological nihilist; for one who cannot be considered a nihilist with reference to

his views on the nature of reality might nonetheless quite consistently hold that there is no objective basis in reality for value-determinations. The question therefore arises: is Nietzsche a nihilist in the latter respect? Danto claims he is, asserting that it is "Nietzsche's view" that "Values have no more application to the world than weights do to numbers . . ." (Danto p. 33). And, on this point, the consensus of popular opinion is if anything more strongly behind Danto than on the previous one.

In the light of the foregoing, Danto's argument for this conclusion has little force; for it consists, in effect, in merely pointing out that if Nietzsche is a metaphysical nihilist, he must *a fortiori* be a nihilist with reference to values. If nothing true can be said about reality, then obviously there can be no substantive and positive assertions pertaining to values which have an objective basis in reality. Danto's reasoning is sound; but since, as I believe I have shown, his major premise is false, his argument does not establish his conclusion. Of course, the falsity of his major premise does not suffice to establish the contrary conclusion; the matter must be settled by looking at what Nietzsche actually has to say about value. It is my contention, however, that Danto is wrong here too; and that Nietzsche is no more an axiological nihilist than he is a metaphysical nihilist.

It must be admitted at the outset that Nietzsche denies the existence of any divinely ordained values or self-contained axiological "facts." Yet it does not follow from this that he therefore holds all values to be completely conventional and without objective basis in reality. Indeed, a quite different conclusion is suggested by such remarks as these: "One has deprived reality of its value, its meaning, its truthfulness, to precisely the extent to which one has mendaciously invented an ideal world" (EH Preface 2). Again: "to us the democratic movement is . . . a form of the decay, namely the diminution of man, making him mediocre and lowering his value" (BGE 203). Again: "my problem . . . : under what conditions did man devise these value judgments good and evil? *and what value do they themselves possess?*" (GM Preface 3).

Again: "The world does not have the value we thought it had. . . . [But] the world might be far more valuable than we used to believe; . . . and while we thought that we accorded it the highest interpretation, we may not even have given our human existence a moderately fair value" (WP 32).

Again: "destruction of the world of being: intermediary period of nihilism: before there is yet present the strength to reverse values and to deify becoming and the apparent world as the only world, and to call them good" (WP 585A). And: "*Fundamental innovations*: In place of 'moral values,' purely naturalistic values . . ." (WP 462). And finally, Nietzsche speaks of "a Dionysian value standard for existence (WP 1041), and says: "Dionysus is a *judge!*—Have I been understood?" (WP 1051).

Unfortunately, Nietzsche has not been understood by all too many writers who, in spite of these and many other similar passages, maintain that he is a nihilist and a complete relativist in the matter of value. In point of fact, he holds that there is a single, ultimate, absolute value, by reference to which the value of everything else can and should be determined: namely, the quantitative and qualitative enhancement of life, and in particular, of what he frequently refers to as "the type 'man,'" culminating in the ideal of a "union of spiritual superiority with well-being and an excess of strength" (WP 899). And he further holds that this absolute value is grounded in the very nature of things. It is not divinely ordained; but neither is it a mere human convention or invention. It derives directly from a consideration of the very essence of life as Nietzsche conceives it: namely, as "will to power." He writes, "For this is the doctrine preached *by life itself* to all that has life: the morality of development. To have and to want more—*growth*, in one word—that is life itself" (WP 125, first emphasis added). And because of the connection Nietzsche envisages between this absolute value and the essential nature of things, there is, on his view, an objective basis for his particular value-determinations. He says, "There is nothing in life that has value, *except the degree of power*—assuming that life itself is the will to power" (WP 55, emphasis added). The use of the term "objective" in this context is not mine, but his. He writes, "What is the objective measure of value? Solely the quantum of enhanced and organized power" (WP 674).

Nietzsche thus is far from holding, as Danto says he does, that "Values have no more application to the world than weights do to numbers . . ." (Danto 33). On the contrary, he holds that the fundamental nature of things and their ultimate value are to be conceived in precisely the same terms; and the values of actions, practices, institutions and the like are to be determined, on his view, precisely in terms of the extent to which they enhance or detract from the (quantitative

and qualitative) degree of power of the beings under consideration—their “quanta of power” being just what they essentially *are* for Nietzsche. He thus is a naturalist in the matter of value, as he himself states he is; but he clearly is no nihilist. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine any stronger version of the thesis that value-determinations have an objective basis in reality than his.

“Nihilism,” in the axiological sense, is characterized by Nietzsche as “the radical repudiation of value, meaning, and desirability” (WP 1). In the same note in which this characterization occurs, he describes his own position as follows: “Against ‘meaninglessness’ on the one hand, against *moral* value judgments on the other” (Ibid., emphasis added). His formulation of the byword of nihilism is: “‘Everything lacks meaning’” (Ibid.). But this byword is certainly not his own. “Now that the shabby origin of [traditional] values is becoming clear,” he says, “the universe seems to have lost value, seems ‘meaningless’—but that is only a *transitional stage*” (WP 7). His own pronouncement, which he places in the mouth of Zarathustra, is very different: “Behold, I teach you the overman. The overman is the meaning of the earth.” For Nietzsche, “the earth” and life *have* a “meaning”—a meaning deriving from the value he takes to be associated with the realization of the ideal of a “union of spiritual superiority with well-being and an excess of strength,” the symbol of which is the “overman.”

On a more general level, there is one very basic consideration which ought to suggest, even to the casual reader, that Nietzsche is not an axiological nihilist. It concerns his program of a “re-valuation of values,” of which he constantly speaks, and to the implementation of which he devotes a great deal of attention. The point may be stated quite simply. Nietzsche could not have undertaken such a project—indeed, he could not even have envisioned it—if he himself did not hold that there is some value-standard by reference to which the traditional values he proposes to consider could be “re-valued.”

He does not propose simply to show that traditional values are nothing more than conventions, with no objective basis in reality. It is not his intention merely to *de-value* these values, while maintaining that there are no others which have been overlooked, which ought to be set in their place. On the contrary, his contention is that certain things have been regarded

as absolute values whose *actual* value is only derivative, or even (in some cases) precisely the opposite of what it has been taken to be; and that there is an ultimate value, which *ought* to be recognized, by reference to which the *actual* value of these traditional values *can* and *should* be determined. And it is on the basis of this conviction that he proceeds to pose and consider "the problem of the value of truth," in the first part of *Beyond Good and Evil* (BGE 1), and the question of the values of such things as religion, conventional morality, social institutions, knowledge and art in subsequent writings.

On these issues, he states his general point as follows: "Man has repeated the same mistake over and over again: he has made a means to life into a standard of life; instead of discovering the standard in the highest enhancement of life itself . . ." (WP 354). When he speaks of "the highest enhancement of life," once again, what he has in mind is: "union of spiritual superiority with well-being and an excess of strength" (WP 899). And with this standard of value in mind, he proceeds to assess the actual value of traditional values—and also of men. Thus he says, "If [an individual] represents the ascending course of mankind, then his value is in fact extraordinary. . . . [While if] he represents the descending course, decay, chronic sickening, then he has little value . . ." (WP 373).

The claim that Nietzsche is an axiological nihilist is thus quite clearly wrong. Like the claim that he is a metaphysical nihilist, it reflects a profound misunderstanding of him. And also like this other claim, the misunderstanding it reflects derives from a misconstrual of a number of things he does say about values.

There are, for example, many passages in his writings which, taken by themselves, would seem to support the view that he is a relativist in the matter of values, holding that all values are merely creations of those whose interests they serve. Nietzsche does frequently speak of changes of values, of differences of values and, most notably, of the "creation of values." For example, he says that the true task of the genuine philosopher "demands that he *create values*" (BGE 211). And he also often says things like: "In valuations are expressed conditions of preservation and growth" (WP 507). But passages like these should not be taken to imply that he holds that even the basic value he affirms, and

in terms of which he proposes to "re-value" traditional values, has no objective standing.

To understand these and other similar passages properly, it is necessary to distinguish between two sorts or orders of values, which Nietzsche treats quite differently. One consists of values which are the creations of particular individuals or groups of men, whose physiological conditions and natural and social circumstances lead them to esteem certain qualities and to condemn others. These conditions and circumstances vary greatly; and so, consequently, do the valuations to which they give rise. It is values so conceived that Nietzsche has in mind when he discusses those which prevail among the great masses of men, on the one hand, and when he urges higher men to create their own values, answering to their own distinctive powers and abilities, on the other.

These values are not thought by Nietzsche to be completely arbitrary, or even merely conventional; for he contends that they are strongly correlated with the psychological and ultimately the physiological characteristics of those who affirm them. But he also holds that they are not absolute; that men differ profoundly with regard to the psychological and physiological characteristics to which they are related; and that consequently it is improper to claim universal validity for any set of values which "express conditions of preservation and growth" of one particular individual or group of men, or to ask which of several competing sets of such values is the "true" or "right" one.

The matter is different, however, with regard to the value by reference to which Nietzsche proposes to carry out his program of a "re-valuation of values." This value is one which he regards as objective and absolute, being grounded in the very nature of things. It is held not to be the value of some particular individual or group of men, but rather that "preached by life itself to all that has life" (WP 125). It does not "express conditions of preservation and growth" of some one individual or group, but rather pertains to the general *desirability* of "preservation and growth," i.e., of the quantitative and qualitative enhancement of life, and in particular of "the type 'man,'" conceived in terms of the emergence of a union of the greatest possible physical well-being and strength with the greatest possible spiritual development.

Given this as the ultimate value, and since one man's meat is sometimes another man's poison, it follows that different

lower-order valuations of various particular things by different types of men are entirely in order, and indeed are quite necessary; and that it will further be appropriate for men of exceptional ability to "create" their own particular "values" as a way, and as a means, of enabling themselves—and through them, "the type 'man'"—to attain the highest possible degree of spiritual development. It should thus be clear that this lower-order relativism in the matter of values, upon which Nietzsche insists, is by no means incompatible with the idea of an ultimate and non-relative standard of value, to which he is equally firmly committed.

There are, to be sure, passages in Nietzsche's writings like the following, from *Twilight of the Idols*:

Judgments, judgments of value, concerning life, for it or against it, can, in the end, never be true; they . . . are worthy of consideration only as symptoms; . . . *the value of life cannot be estimated* (Twilight II 2).

Passages like this one may seem to pose a serious problem for the interpretation of Nietzsche I am suggesting. It seems to me, however, that they in fact do not. It is quite true that Nietzsche regards judgments about or estimations of the value of life, not as propositions which—at least in principle—might be true, but rather as indications of the sort of stuff the person is made of who makes them. So, for example, in the same section of *Twilight of the Idols*, he observes that, "Concerning life, the wisest men of all ages have judged alike: *it is no good*"; and then says: "'At least something must be sick here,' *we retort*" (Twilight II 1).

However, this does not yet touch the central point, which concerns Nietzsche's meaning in asserting that "the value of life cannot be estimated." In this connection, it is of interest that he goes on to say, "For a philosopher to see a problem in the value of life is thus an objection to him . . ." (Twilight II 2). I take him to mean that one is mistaken to think that the value of life is *something problematical*—an issue which remains open after the essential nature and conditions of life have been determined, and which is to be resolved by seeing how life fares when measured against a standard of value which has some other derivation. He holds, on the contrary, that the value of life is *not* problematical in this sense. For him, the ultimate standard of value is to be conceived in terms which derive directly from a considera-

tion of the essential nature of life itself; and if the former is given and determined by the latter, then the question of the value of life cannot arise, and the value of life cannot become a problem. Thus "the value of life cannot be estimated," on his view, not because life is without value, but rather because its essential nature itself determines the ultimate standard of value, and because it itself, in its highest form of development, *is* the ultimate value; and therefore because there is no conceptually distinct value or standard of value in terms of which *its* value can be "estimated."

Similarly, when Nietzsche says that "judgments" concerning the value of life "can . . . never be true," even when they are positive, his point concerns judgments in which life is asserted to be of value *because* it happens to contain certain features to which a conceptually distinct standard of value attributes positive significance. Nietzsche denies that any such judgments are true, because he denies the objective validity of any standard of value of this sort. His contention that life, in its highest form of development, is the ultimate value, on the other hand, is a judgment of a quite different sort—if, indeed, it is even a *judgment* at all. For it involves, not passing judgment upon the extent to which life is capable of satisfying certain antecedently determined conditions, but rather merely accepting life on its own terms, as he understands them.

In short, life, for Nietzsche, is not something the value of which can be judged or determined by reference to any independent criteria. Rather, it is, so to speak, a game, which exists because the world as "will to power" of necessity gives birth to it; in which all of us, however well or poorly we can and do play, are by our very natures engaged; which has rules set not by us, nor by mere chance, but by the essential features of the "will to power" that is constitutive of reality generally; and the very nature of which indicates an ideal that both constitutes the ultimate value and determines the standard of value for everything falling within its compass. When Nietzsche's assertion that "the value of life cannot be estimated" is viewed in this light, it seems to me quite evident that it is not to be construed as a profession of axiological nihilism.

The widespread view, endorsed by Danto, that Nietzsche is a "nihilist," and that his philosophy is a philosophy of "radical nihilism," is wrong. A careful analysis of his writings

shows that he neither considered himself to be a nihilist, nor deserves to be considered one, either metaphysically or axiologically. Far from considering nihilism to be the last word, he actually regards it as a mere "transitional stage"—a natural consequence of the discovery of the untenability of certain traditional metaphysical and axiological views; which he himself goes beyond, and to which his own philosophy is a "countermovement." Far from holding that there are no truths about reality which may be discovered and stated, because there is no actual nature of things to discover and describe, he in fact holds the contrary, and has a good deal to say of a substantive nature in this connection. And far from denying objective validity to all value-judgments as such, he in fact maintains that a certain standard of value has an objective basis in the very nature of things.

To show this, of course, is not at all to show that the substantive positions Nietzsche takes on these matters are correct. I have not been concerned in this paper either to defend or to criticize them, and do not propose to turn to this task now. This task is an important one—much more important, indeed, than that of merely showing that he does take such positions, and what they are. Yet philosophers will not turn to such an undertaking, because they will not even see the need for it, if the erroneous view prevails that Nietzsche is a nihilist, and therefore *takes* no substantive metaphysical and axiological positions which require evaluation.

NIETZSCHE AND HIS DOCTRINE OF CONSCIOUS ILLUSION

HANS VAIHINGER

(THE WILL TO ILLUSION)

That life and science are not possible without imaginary or false conceptions was also recognized by Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche early observed that such invented and therefore erroneous conceptions are unconsciously employed by men to the advantage of life and science; he was here following Schopenhauer and probably Richard Wagner and his doctrine of "hallucination". But that such false ideas must be employed both in science and in life by intellectually mature people and with the full realization of their falsity is a fact which Nietzsche came to perceive more and more clearly; and it was Lange, in all likelihood, who in this case served as his guide.

Nietzsche, to whom Lange's name was doubtless already known through the philological circles at Bonn, became acquainted with the *Geschichte des Materialismus* which had appeared in October 1865, after his departure from Bonn. He wrote an enthusiastic letter to his friend Gersdorff about the book in September 1866, agreeing with it completely; and on February 16, 1868, he wrote an even more enthusiastic letter to the same friend. He there says that it is "a book which gives infinitely more than the title promises, a real treasure-house, to be looked into and read repeatedly." That in particular Lange's theory of Metaphysics as a justified form of "poetry" made a deep impression upon Nietzsche, is quite clear from Rohde's letter of November 4, 1868. That this notable work long continued to influence Nietzsche is also evident from certain polemical remarks against it, to be found in Vol. XIII, p. 339, and Vol. XIV, p. 14 (cf. p. 171) of his Collected Letters. The following account of Nietzsche's doctrines, as compared with those of Lange, shows that in regard to Illusion Nietzsche must definitely be set down as a disciple and successor of Lange.

From Hans Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of "As-If,"* 2nd edition (1935), trans. by C. K. Ogden; reprinted with the permission of Routledge and Kegan-Paul, Ltd. and Harper and Row, New York.

Nietzsche, like Lange, emphasizes the great significance of "appearances" in all the various fields of science and life and, like him, points out the fundamental and far-reaching function of "invention" and "falsification" as well as the falsifying influence and poetic "creation", and therewith the value and the justification of the "myth"—not in religion alone. Like Lange he holds that over against the world of "shifting", "evanescent" becoming, there is set up, in the interests of understanding and of the æsthetic satisfaction of the "fantasy", a world of "being" in which everything appears "rounded off" and complete; that in this way there arises an antithesis, a "conflict" between "knowledge" and "art", "science" and "wisdom", which is only resolved by recognizing that this "invented" world is a justified and "indispensable" "myth"; from which it finally follows that "false" and "true" are "relative" concepts. All this Nietzsche could already have found in Lange. This Kantian or, if you will, neo-Kantian origin of Nietzsche's doctrine has hitherto been completely ignored, because Nietzsche, as was to be expected from his temperament, has repeatedly and ferociously attacked Kant whom he quite misunderstood. As if he had not also attacked Schopenhauer and Darwin, to whom he was just as much indebted! As a matter of fact there is a great deal of Kant in Nietzsche; not, it is true, of Kant in the form in which he is found in the text-books (and in which he will probably remain for all eternity), but of the spirit of Kant, of the real Kant who understood the nature of appearance through and through, but who, in spite of having seen through it, also consciously saw and recognized its usefulness and necessity.

The writings of his youth—which are printed in Vol. I of his works and to which the posthumous pieces of Vols. IX and X also belong—contain a large number of important notes in a rough form. All these early attempts came to a head in the remarkable fragment dating from the year 1873, *Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne* (X, 189–215). "Lying, in the extra-moral sense", is what Nietzsche, with his well-known fondness for forced expressions, calls the conscious deviation from reality to be found in myth, art, metaphor, etc. The intentional adherence to illusion, in spite of the realization of its nature, is a kind of "lie in an extra-moral sense"; and "lying" is simply the conscious, intentional encouragement of illusion.

This is very clearly the case in art, the subject from which Nietzsche started in his first work, *Geburt der Tragödie*, etc.,

reprinted in Vol. I. Art is the conscious creation of an æsthetic illusion; in this sense art rests upon the "primitive longing for illusion" 35; "drama as a primitive phenomenon" consists "in beholding ourselves transformed before ourselves and then as if we had actually passed into another body and into another character" 60, 168. Drama, in general, operates with "fictional" entities 54. Of the "apollinian illusion" (33, 62) he four times on p. 150 f. (as also 147 and X, 120) uses the As-if formula in this sense. This "æsthetic play" 157, 168, these "countless illusions of beautiful appearance, are what make existence in general worth while" 171, 522. This is "the wisdom of the illusion" 23. For that reason "he who destroys illusion within himself and in others is punished by that most severe of tyrants, nature" 340, for "it is part of the essence of action to be veiled in illusion" 56.¹ The myth is considered from this point of view and commended 147, 160, 411, 511, 560, especially as a mythical fiction, 299. The myth, which the Greeks consciously cultivated, we have lost "in the abstract character of our mythless existence" 170; with us it has become a "fairy-tale", but it must "be brought back to virility" 551; even science cannot exist without myth 102, 106. Cf. Vol. IX, 179, 184, 234, 288, 433; also Vol. X, 88, 128, 139, 203. Appearance, illusion, is a necessary pre-supposition of art as well as of life. This summarizes Nietzsche's youthful writings. In them we see the idea already developing that this illusion is and must be, for the superior man, a conscious one.

In the posthumous works of his youthful period (Vols. IX and X) this latter point is more clearly made. At first, indeed, Nietzsche speaks merely of "delusional conceptions as necessary and salutary provisions of the instinct" Vol. IX, 69, of a "law of the mechanism of delusions" 100, 124 ff. Religion also comes under this heading² 130, but particularly "the actual delusional pictures of artistic culture" 148. Of these "delusional constructs" he also speaks on pp. 158, 165, 179, 184. On page 186 he says: "The realm of delusional pictures

¹ "There are errors of the most salutary and beneficial kind" (I, 179) and, on the other hand, there are "doctrines which I regard as true but deadly" (367); hence Nietzsche also approves of Plato's indispensable lie in the *Republic* (376, cf. 487).

² It is very striking that Nietzsche here already recognizes the freedom of the will "as a necessary delusional concept", e.g. Vol. IX, 186, 188 f.; 207, Vol. X, 213. Man "conceives of freedom as if he could also act otherwise", indeed "the whole process of world-history goes on as if freedom of will existed". "Moral freedom", however, "is a necessary illusion."

is also part of nature and worthy of equal study." Thus there arises a whole "network of illusions" 186 f. These delusional concepts are created by the will 192, 200, and created by means of "deceptive mechanisms" 106, 210. "Even the recognition of their real nature does not destroy their efficacy" 101. This recognition Nietzsche at first feels as "torture" 101, 126, but the perception of the necessity of these illusions and phantasms for life (76, 108, 185, 189) leads to the conscious, pleasurable affirmation of illusion; in this sense, he says p. 190: "My philosophy is an inverted Platonism: the further it is from actual reality, the purer, more beautiful and better it becomes. Living in illusion as the ideal": this is also the meaning of the utterance on p. 109: "the highest indication of will is the belief in the illusion ("although we see through it"); and theoretical pessimism (i.e. the pain we feel because we are thrown back upon delusional concepts) is biting its own tail".

Entirely in the same sense is Vol. X, 119: "The last of the philosophers . . . proves the necessity of illusion". The consummation of the history of philosophy is therefore, according to Nietzsche, the philosophy of illusion: the realization of its indispensability and justification: "Our greatness lies in the supreme illusion", for it is there that we are creators (146). Now, however, it is no longer the artistic illusion (the "artistic veil" 110), whose necessity for life is recognized: now the circle of illusions recognized as necessary and consciously grasped is continually widened: "the anthropomorphic element in all knowledge" (121) now makes its appearance, cf. 195 ff. It is not only "life that needs illusions, i.e. untruths regarded as truths" (125 ff.), nor does our culture alone rest upon "isolated illusions" (127); our knowledge also needs them. Thus the "surface-nature of our intellect" 126 ff., leads to the employment of general concepts, already in Vol. I, p. 526 disparaged in the extravagant expression "insanity". In the same line of thought he says on p. 130: "we emphasize the main characters and forget the accessory ones". Concepts we obtain only through "the identification of dissimilars" and "we then act as if the concept of man, for instance, actually were something real, whereas it has been formed only by the dropping away of all individual characters" 172, 195. Our intellect operates with conscious symbols, pictures and rhetorical figures 130, 134, 167, with "coarse and inadequate abstractions" 169, with metaphors 148: "time, space and causality are only cognitive metaphors" 166. "To

know is merely to work with one's favourite metaphors" 171, 194. Thus "we live and think wholly under the influence of effects of the illogical, in a world of no knowledge and false knowledge" 173.³

All these tentative beginnings lead up to the fragment already mentioned on the Lies in the Extra-Moral Sense, the fundamental idea of which is that not only our language, but also our conceptual thinking, is based upon falsifying operations, i.e. "operations not corresponding to reality" 214. This is once more set forth in detail for the general concept and for "the great structure of concepts", e.g. 195 ff. "The construction of metaphors is the fundamental instinct of man" 203, and by this artistic impulse which is also called on p. 128 simply the "mythical impulse" he is led, even in the domain of the theory of knowledge, to false constructs 213, 505 (cf. 139, 140, 162): these are at first fashioned unconsciously (196) but "for the liberated intellect" (205) they are conscious aids: "scaffoldings."

The writings of the middle or transitional period, which, be it said, are of a less dithyrambic character, deepen the understanding already gained at certain points.⁴ The extravagant expression "lie" now only occurs rarely: II, 5, 162 ("the Greeks intentionally invested life with lies"); III, 105 ("the Muses as liars, the artist as a deceiver") IV, 119; ("the lies and deceits of sensation") V, 309 ("Education, which sanctifies so many lies") XI, 45, 330, 408. He remarks pathetically in XII, 48: "Ah, now we must embrace untruth, now at last error becomes a lie, and lying to ourselves a necessity of life."

The thought that we must consciously make use of "untruth" in our thought still causes him suffering: "One question there is that seems to lie like lead upon our tongues and yet never becomes articulate: the question whether we can consciously remain in falsehood and, if we must, whether death would not be preferable?" (II, 51). Again in V, 142, "the recognition of delusion and error as a condition of know-

³ It is in this sense that we must also understand the following important sentence Vol. I, p. 128, cf. 110): "The tremendous courage and wisdom of Kant and Schopenhauer accomplished that most difficult of all victories, the victory over the optimism which lies concealed in the essence of logic." Cf. for logical optimism and pessimism, p. 159 ff.

⁴ These writings are *Menschliches Allzumenschliches*; *Morgenröthe*; *Fröhliche Wissenschaft*—in Vols. II–V, along with the supplementary Vols. XI and XII, 1–233.

ing and feeling" would without art "be unendurable" and must lead to suicide." But his realization of the fact that ideas, of whose untruth we are conscious, are biological and theoretical necessities becomes more and more clear. At first this realization declares itself in the recognition that "errors and mistakes of fantasy are the only means by which mankind has gradually . . . been able to elevate itself" (47, III, 228; cf. also IV, 97, XI, 36): Man must, however, "understand not only the historical" but also "the psychological legitimacy [which therefore applies also to the living] of such concepts" (38); he must realize that the engine, man, "has to be stoked with . . . illusions, one-sided truths (236). Nietzsche recalls the saying of Voltaire: "Croyez-moi, mon ami, l'erreur aussi a son mérite" II, 16: for that reason we must not "destroy" such illusions (368) for they are necessary even to the advanced mind, indeed as necessary as fairy tales and make-believe games are to the child 139 (and for the child too his games are conscious self-deceptions).⁵ In the advanced mind there develops more and more "the consciousness of illusion" V, 87, indeed a cult of illusion, "if nothing any longer proves to be divine unless it be error, blindness and lies", since on these "life has been arranged", V, 275 f. This "impenetrable net of errors" is necessary for life XII, 39 ff.

To a mind thus advanced all the customary articles of belief and the convictions even of science, become "regulative fictions" V, 273. He recognizes them as "mere necessary optical errors—necessary if we care to live at all, errors, in so far as all the laws of perspective must by their nature be errors" XII, 42. In this sense he speaks on p. 46 of the "really living untruths", of the "living errors", and adds: "that is why we must allow errors to live and give them a wide domain". Summing up, he says 48: "in order that there might be some degree of consciousness in the world, an unreal world of error

⁵ In this sense he says patiently XI, 21: "Why cannot we learn to look upon metaphysics and religion as the legitimate play of grown-ups?" Similarly of the "illusions of the next world" XI, 66. "There may be necessary errors", he says, XI, 320, in definite contradiction of what Pascal says of Christian dogmas. "We need blindness sometimes and must allow certain articles of faith and errors to remain untouched within us—so long as they maintain us in life" XII, 48. In another passage (XII, 212) he appears to reprobate this "conscious adherence to illusion and the compulsory assimilation of it as the basis of our civilization", which he himself finds necessary; but the criticism is directed against a misuse by Richard Wagner.

had to arise: beings with a belief in permanency, in individuals, etc. Not until an imaginary world, in contradiction to the absolute flux, had arisen, was it possible to erect on this foundation a structure of knowledge; and now finally we can see the fundamental error [the belief in permanence] upon which everything else rests . . . but this error can only be destroyed with life itself . . . our organs are adjusted to error. Thus there arises in the wise man the contradiction of life and of its ultimate determinations: man's instinct for knowledge presupposes belief in error and life . . . to err is the condition of living . . . the fact that we know that we err does not do away with error. And that is not a bitter thought! We must love and cultivate error: it is the mother of knowledge."

Many passages are found in which he summarizes his thought, for instance V, 149: "Such erroneous articles of faith . . . are the beliefs that there are permanent things, that there are equal things, that our will is free . . ." V, 154: "We operate with things that do not exist, with lines, surfaces, bodies, atoms, divisible time and divisible space . . ."; V, 159: "We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we can live—by assuming bodies, lines, surfaces, causes and effects, motion and rest, shape and content; without these articles of faith nobody would now be able to endure life! But that does not mean that anything has yet been proved. Life is no argument; for error might be one of the conditions of life." And XI, 72, he develops the idea that matter, as a mass in extension, "is an hallucination; like things in motion, like Thing in general, like all permanence." So he says XII, 24: "Without the assumption of a kind of being which we could oppose to actual reality, we should have nothing by which we could measure, compare or picture it: error is the presupposition of knowledge. Partial permanency, relative bodies, identical events, similar events—with these we falsify the true state of affairs, but it would be impossible to have knowledge of anything without having falsified it in this way." "At the beginning of all intellectual activity we encounter the grossest assumptions and inventions, for instance, identity, thing, permanence—these are all coeval with the intellect, and the intellect has modelled its conduct of them" 46. And it is in this sense that he says 156: "The intellect is the means of deception, with its forced forms—substance, identity, permanency"; but it is on such opinions as "the belief in identity,

number, space, etc. that the duration of mankind is based", 208.

Thinking is dependent upon language, and language is already full of false presuppositions: "we are still continually seduced by words and concepts, into imagining things as simpler than they really are, imagining them separated from one another, indivisible and existing in and for themselves. A philosophical mythology lies hidden in language which breaks through at every moment, no matter how careful we may be" III, 198; these mythical, fictional constituents of language must accordingly be employed with the consciousness of their falsity; cf. XI, 178. It is well said in XI, 180 that "we speak as though there were really existing things, and our science speaks only of such things. But real things exist only for human optics: and from this we cannot escape".

Nietzsche frequently points to artificial simplification as a principal mechanism of our thought; as in Vol. XI, 291 in that very remarkable passage, according to which we "see our infinitely complicated nature in the form of a simplification," etc. Similarly XII, 10: "In what a curious simplification of things and human beings do we live! We have made everything easy and convenient for ourselves . . . and given our thought *carte blanche* to make all sorts of erroneous inferences"; cf. XII, 46.

Next to simplification, isolation plays a leading part, e.g. in mechanics: "we isolate conceptually first the direction, secondly the moving object, thirdly pressure, etc.—in reality there are no such isolated things" XII, 34.

Of logic he says II, 26: it "is based upon presuppositions to which nothing in the real world corresponds, e.g. the presupposition of the equality of things, of the identity of the same thing at different points of time." For this "illusion of identity"⁶ see also III, 198, XI, 179 (cf. Lange's similar utterances above (p. 337)). He says nothing more about the general concepts, but he has this excellent remark XII, 28, on the "archetype", i.e. the idea corresponding to the universal concept: "the archetype is a fiction, like purpose, line, etc."; cf. 33: "our concepts are inventions."

"Laws of nature" are the remains of "mythological dreaming" III, 18; XII, 30: and in XII, 42 we find the following, so strongly reminiscent of Kant: "It is our laws and our con-

⁶ Nietzsche frequently refers, for instance XII, 26 ff., to this "error of identity" which, like the error of permanence, contributes, as he says, to the development of the belief in "things" and "substances."

formity to laws that we read into the world of phenomena—however much the contrary seems to be true.” Causality is a “picture”, something “that we read in”; what we call “experiencing” is, in this sense, “an imagining” IV, 124.

“The assumptions of mechanics” also rest on ideal inventions, particularly the conception of “force residing in mathematical points and mathematical lines”; “they are in the last analysis practical sciences, and start from the fundamental errors of man, his beliefs in things and identities” XII, 33.

New is his realization of the fictional nature of many mathematical concepts, II, 26: “in nature there is no exactly straight line nor any true circle” 36; “numerals are based on the error that more than one identical thing exists . . . here error already reigns, for here we are already imagining entities and unities that do not exist.”⁷ “We introduce a mathematical mean-line into absolute movement and, in general, we introduce lines and surfaces on the basis of the intellect, i.e. of error, the error of assuming equality and constancy”, XII, 30. “Our assumption that there are bodies, surfaces, lines, is simply a consequence of our assumption that there are substances and things and permanency. Just as certainly as our concepts are inventions, so certainly are the constructs of mathematics inventions” 33.

The idea of permanent things also belongs here. “It is probably due to our lack of development that we believe in things and assume something permanent in becoming, that we believe in an ego” XI, 185; again in XII, 23: “The only existence for which we have any warrant is mutable not self-identical and possesses relations. . . . Now thought asserts just the opposite as regards reality. It need not, however, for

⁷ The same passage continues: “Our sensations of space and time are false, for if consistently tested, they lead to logical contradictions. In all scientific calculations we inevitably operate with a number of imaginary quantities, but because these quantities are, at least, constant, as, for instance, our sensations of time and space, the scientific results acquire absolute rigidity and certainty.” In other words we always think and compute with constant errors, II, 36 f. Our empirical conception of the world, therefore, is based on “erroneous fundamental assumptions”; “the world as idea means the world as error”. In this connection Nietzsche expressly invokes Kant: “when Kant says: ‘reason does not derive its laws from nature but prescribes them to nature’, this is, in regard to the concept of nature, completely true.” This sentence of Kant, as we can infer from other occasional references to it, had made a great impression upon Nietzsche: it is just this “creative” “active” force of the mind, its “inventive, poetic, and falsifying” activity that Nietzsche, as we shall see, repeatedly emphasizes. There is, then, much more of Kant in Nietzsche than is generally imagined.

that reason, be true. Indeed this assertion of the contrary represents perhaps only a condition of our conception. "Thought would be impossible if it did not fundamentally misconceive the nature of being: it must predicate substance and equality, because a knowledge of complete flux is impossible; it must ascribe attributes to reality, in order to exist itself. No subject and no object need necessarily exist to make thought possible but thought must believe in both." "The intellect has not been arranged for the understanding of becoming. It endeavours to prove universal rigidity [eternal permanence] owing to its origin in images." The belief in permanence, duration, the unconditioned, is not "the belief that is most true, but the one that is most useful" XII, 24-27, 30. Our conception of space is also based on the belief in the permanent: "our space holds good for an imaginary world", 31. The belief in permanence, which arises of itself within us, and which science maintains in its own way, is the basis of all belief in "reality" (such as bodies, permanence of substance, etc.) 44 f. The permanent individual and his unity is, likewise, something necessarily imagined 128.

Freedom and responsibility are frequently treated as necessary errors; so, e.g., II, 65, 93, 101, 108, 109 ("the illusion of free choice"); III, 31: "We can only dream ourselves free, not make ourselves so" 190, 198; for that reason even "a complete atheist who holds firmly to the fundamentally irresponsible and non-meritorious character of all human action, can experience a feeling of shame when treated *as if* he merited this or that"; he then appears to himself as if "he had forced his way into a higher order of beings," 239; cf. V, 149. Here also, belongs the statement XI, 31: "such a thing as character has no real existence, it is only a helpful abstraction"; and particularly the following trenchant saying 45: "Blame only has meaning as a means of deterrence and subsequent influence as a motive; the object of praise is to spur on, to incite to imitation: in so far as both are given *as if* they had been merited by some act, the falsehood and the illusion present in all praise and blame are unavoidable; they are, indeed, the means sanctified by the higher purpose." But these "moral advantages are still indispensable" XI, 195; and similarly we put it "*as if* we showed the way to nature" in our acts, whereas in truth we are led by her XI, 203, 213. Our freedom, our autonomy, is an "interpretation", i.e. something "read in" 216; XII, 40. Very characteristically he says XII,

224: "I will set down once for all in order everything that I negate: There is no reward or punishment, no wisdom, no goodness, no purpose, no will. [But] in order to act you must believe in error and you will continue to behave in accordance with these errors even when you have recognized them to be errors."

The subject, too, is a self-fashioned concept that we cannot dispense with: "we place ourselves as a unity in the midst of this self-fashioned world of images, as that which abides in the midst of change. But it is an error" XI, 185. He says pertinently in XI, 291 that the ego "is an attempt to see and to understand our infinitely complicated nature in a simplified fashion—an image to represent a thing". That is the "original error" XII, 26. The whole "opposition between subject and object" is an artificial division V, 294.

Nietzsche also recognizes the distinction between Thing-in-itself and Appearance as an artificial one (cf. p. 75 above, on the subject of this separation) and consequently as a conceptual invention: "the true essence of things is an invention of the conceiving being, without which it would not be able to represent things to itself" XII, 22 and V, 294. The entire phenomenal world is a conception "spun out of intellectual errors" II, 33: "the world as idea" is the same as "the world as error", 37, 47; IV, 119, 120,—"the world of phantoms in which we live." "Our external world is a product of the fantasy" XII, 36. "The belief in external things" is one of the necessary errors of mankind, 40. "Matter, stuff, is a subjective form", 71; "the whole perceptual and sensible world is the primordial poem of mankind" 170.

The æsthetic illusion naturally recurs again and again, for instance, II, 157 and twice in the "as if" form, 178⁸; XI, 23 and XII, 175. He speaks of the "artistic deception" in III, 118; V, 311 and XI, 72. Art, "a kind of cult of the untrue," is based on "the will to illusion", V, 149.

We will close with the fine passage V, 88: "What then is 'Appearance' for me! Assuredly not the converse of any real Being—what can I say of any Being except the mere predicates of its appearance! Assuredly not a dead mask that can be put over the face of some unknown and presumably also taken off again! Appearance is for me that which acts and moves . . ."

⁸ The As-if also appears in II, 271, as an indication of a conventional fiction, and (*Ibid.*, 333) as an expression of the fiction of the constitutional state; in V, 302, on the contrary, it is the formula of an hypothesis.

The works of Nietzsche's third period in Vols. VI–VIII⁹ contain (apart from the introductory chapters of *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* in Vol. VII) less that bears on our subject than the posthumous writings belonging to this period in Vols. XII, 235 ff., XIII, XIV, XV; the last two volumes deserve our particular attention.

It is intelligible enough, from what has preceded, that "the problem of the value of truth", ceremoniously introduced in Vol. VII, IX ff. (cf. 471, 482) can now be stated; here Nietzsche places himself not only "beyond good and evil" but also beyond truth and falsehood¹⁰: "it is nothing but a moral prejudice that regards truth as of more value than illusion . . . there would be no life at all were it not on the basis of perspective valuations and semblances" 55: "the perspective is the basic condition of all life" 4, 11. This expression, seldom found up till now, henceforth occurs more frequently: the perspective is a necessary deception which remains even after we have recognized its falsity. In this sense Nietzsche had already V, 294, given to his philosophy the appropriate title of "perspectivism".¹¹ This is also the sense in which the often quoted passage VII, 21, is to be understood: "it is now time to substitute for the Kantian question: 'how are synthetic judgments a priori possible?' another question: 'Why is the belief in such judgments necessary?'—to understand namely that, for the survival of beings like ourselves, belief in the truth of such judgments is necessary: for which reason they may, of course, even be false judgments! . . . They are indeed all false judgments. But belief in their truth is necessary as a superficial optical illusion characteristic of the perspective optics of life". "The falsest judgments (among which are to

⁹ *Zarathustra, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Genealogie der Moral, Götzendämmerung, Antichrist.*

¹⁰ "Truth does not mean the antithesis of error but the relation of certain errors to other errors such, for instance, as that they are older, more completely assimilated, that we do not know how to live without them, and the like," XIII, 87; (cf. our remarks above, page 108, on "Truth the most expedient form of error"). The antithesis is not "true" and "false" (*Ibid.*, 69). "What is it that forces us to assume an essential antithesis of 'true' and 'false'?" VII, 55.

¹¹ In XII, 43, we find "our poetico-logical power of determining the perspectives in all things," and, in quite a Kantian fashion, Nietzsche speaks of "the abundance of optical errors" which inevitably flow therefrom and which we must consciously maintain. This perspective mode of imaginative creation, found in all organic beings, itself, he says, constitutes a happening, an inner happening accompanying the external one, XIII, 63.

be classed synthetic judgments a priori) are the most indispensable ones for us; without giving validity to logical fictions, without measuring reality by the purely imaginary world of the unconditioned, the "self-identical", without a continual falsification of the world by number, man cannot live—the renunciation of false judgments would be a renunciation of life" 12 f. (cf. XIV, 191, 210). The "will to deception" is to be thus understood 10 f., which indeed is the soul of art (84, 123, 472). "Whatever be the philosophic standpoint we take to-day, from whatever side we look at it, the mistakenness of the world in which we believe we are living is the most definite and most certain thing we see. . . . And why should the world in which we live not be a fiction?" 54–56. Even the most exact and the most positive "science tries to keep us in this simplified, entirely artificial world, invented and falsified to suit us; and willy-nilly science loves error because it is alive and loves life" 41–42. In this sense, for instance, physics makes use of the atomic theory, though it "is one of the most thoroughly disproved things that exist"; but the atomic theory serves the scientist "as a convenient tool, as an abbreviation of his means of expression" 22, 27 f.; the whole of physics is such an artificial, false, temporarily serviceable "arrangement" 24. Subject and Object are such artificial yet, for the time being, indispensable concepts; the "ego" and the "it" 28–30 are likewise "fictions" 56, as are Cause and Effect. "'Cause' and 'Effect' must not erroneously be made concrete . . . they should be used only as pure concepts, i.e., as conventional fictions for the purpose of defining, understanding and explaining. . . . It is we ourselves who have invented the causes . . . interdependence, relativity, compulsion, number, law, freedom, end: and when we read this sign-world into things as something really existing and mix it up with them, we are merely doing what we have always done, namely mythologizing", 33. Nietzsche attacks in particular the mythical idea of the "active thing": "There is no substratum, there is no 'being' behind the action, behind the 'action on', behind the becoming; the 'agent' has been merely read into the action—the action is all there is"; the atom and the Kantian Thing-in-itself are also such conventional fictions 327. So, too, is that "natural law of which you physicists talk so proudly but which exists—only in virtue of your interpretation . . . it is no fact . . . on the contrary, it is only a naïve human manner of arranging things" 34—just a "humanistic" anthro-

pomorphism which for the enlightened man is conscious. He knows more or less clearly "that the thing is not so, and that we merely let it stand at that", 188.

The fragments in Vol. XIV offer a welcome amplification of this, particularly the famous passage p. 16: "The erroneousness of a concept does not for me constitute an objection to it; the question is—to what extent is it advantageous to life. . . . Indeed I am convinced that *the most erroneous assumptions are precisely the most indispensable for us*, that without granting the validity of the logical fiction, without measuring reality by the invented world of the unconditioned, the self-identical, man could not live; and that a negation of this fiction . . . is equivalent to a negation of life itself. To admit untruth as a condition of life—this does indeed imply a terrible negation of the customary valuations."

On page 31 he says more briefly: "My basic concept is that the 'unconditioned' is a regulative fiction, to which reality must not be ascribed", but such fictions are useful and necessary to life, even to the life of "knowledge", for "knowledge is, in its nature, something that invents, something that falsifies", 19; "a fictive, assumptive force must be assumed, just as we must assume the inheritance and perpetuation of fictions", 30. We may recognize the *contradictio* in these fictional concepts,¹² e.g. in the concepts of the Unconditioned, the Existent, Absolute knowledge, Absolute values, the Thing-in-itself, Pure mind (28), but "the intellect is not possible without the positing" of such fictional concepts, particularly that of the unconditioned, 29. These fictions, as we have already seen, Nietzsche calls perspectives: "If we could get out of the world of perspectives we should perish. . . . We must approve of the false . . . and accept it" 13: "the perspective nature of the world is as deep as our 'understanding' can reach to-day" 7: and in this sense he shows that "number"¹³ is a perspective form, as are "time" and "space". We no more

¹² The "world of Being" is an invention—there is only a world of Becoming; and it is because of this invented world of Being that the poet regards himself also as "being" and contrasts himself with it XIV, 52. Being is, consequently, a product of thought, substance is an "error" 311, 366. "The royal prerogative, which we assume after the manner of artists, plumes itself on having created this world", he says quite in the Kantian tradition in XIV, 15.

¹³ "Number is an out-and-out invention" XIV, 34. "The arithmetical formulæ are only regulative fictions" 44. The same holds of the geometrical forms: "a straight line has never occurred" 42. "The objects of mathematics do not exist" 320.

harbour "one soul" in our breasts than we do "two": "individuals"¹⁴, like material "atoms"¹⁵, are no longer tenable, unless it be as manipulative devices of thought. . . . "Subject"¹⁶ and object", "active and passive", "cause and effect"¹⁷, "means and end"¹⁸ are all merely perspective forms. Such "perspective falsifications" (323) are necessary for man's existence and indeed for that of all organisms; "Along with the organic world a perspective sphere is given" 324, at first, of course, unconscious; but in the mature man there develops a conscious "will to illusion, the realization of perspectives, i.e. positing of falsehood as truth" 89. The human intellect, with its fixed forms, particularly its grammaticological categories (37) is a "falsificative apparatus" (34)—and yet man makes use of it consciously. For the purpose of life and knowledge—in so far as we can speak of such things—the intellect needs, "as a necessary means, the introduction of full-blown fictions as *schemata*, which . . . enable us to conceive of happenings¹⁹ as simpler than they really are" (47), in other words, to falsify them. Thus it has come about that these errors have made man inventive: and that is why the "cult of error" is necessary 312: indeed a "joy in illusion" develops (366, 389) the "will to illusion"²⁰ (360), for we

¹⁴ The concepts, "individual", "person", etc. are indeed false, but serve admirably to simplify thought XIV, 37; they are however "deceptions" 325 f.; like all the concepts enumerated above, they are "false yet permanent errors" 326.

¹⁵ Cf. for the atomic theory as a mere pictorial construction for purposes of calculation XIV, 325.

¹⁶ On the "mythology of the subject-concept" cf. XIV, 329.

¹⁷ "Our 'means and ends' are very useful abbreviations for rendering processes tangible and concrete" XIV, 45.

¹⁸ On cause and effect, as consequences of an erroneous conception of the relation of subject and predicate, cf. the remarks XIV, 22, 27.

¹⁹ Perspectives are principally brought about through simplification: "life is only possible by means of narrowing, perspective-creating forces" XIV, 45. In this sense Nietzsche also speaks of an "exclusive, selective instinct" 46. The simplifying and therefore falsifying nature of our thought is often emphasized, for instance, in XIV, 34, 320. There are "simplifications of the true facts temporarily permitted" 42. Cf. XIII, 80 f.: simplifying-falsifying-inventing; cf. also 241, 249. "The intellect is an apparatus for simplification" and for analyzing, 245.

²⁰ Of illusion in art, especially epic art, Nietzsche says that the *raconteur* speaks to his admiring audience *as if* he had been present at the events he narrates while his audience knows quite well that it is a deception, etc. XIV, 132; art, in general, consists "of intentional transformation, i.e. falsification" 134.—In this connection let me also quote the following significant aphorism (XIII, 207): "Not to measure the world by our personal feelings but *as if* it were a play and we were part of the play." This

recognize "the value of regulative fictions, e.g. the fictions of logic" 322.

That the logical forms rest on fictions is frequently repeated: "Logic is a consistent sign-language worked out on the assumption of the existence of identical cases" (22); and consequently "logicality is only possible as a result of a basic error" 29: "that identical things and identical cases exist is the basic fiction, first in judgment and then in inference" 33, 35, 37: "The invented, rigid, conceptual world" is an important means of thought 46: indeed our practical thinking does not in the least follow the fictional scheme of logic: "Logical thinking represents the model-example of a perfect fiction": "Thus the working of the intellect is to be regarded as if it really corresponded to this regulative scheme of fictional thought" 42 f.—Cf. also the remarks VIII, 78 ff. on logic (and mathematics) as "sign-conventions" and also those on the grammatical forms dominating logical thought, the "metaphysics of language". Cf. XIII, 47, 60, 85. Even Plato thought of his "Ideas" essentially in this way (*Ibid.*, 323)—i.e. as mere "regulative fictions".

In one part of the fragments of Vol. XV prominence is given to an aspect of Nietzsche's thought of which we have already had occasional glimpses before: the damage these regulative fictions cause when not used as such but when a character of reality is erroneously ascribed to them, as is indeed generally the case. In this sense these regulative conceptual aids are—fictions *in malo sensu*, "merely" fictions.²¹ Thus "the subject, the *ego* is only a fiction" 32; the mind as the agent of thought is fictional, nay, the pure logical thinking of the mind, posited by the theorists of knowledge, is "an absolutely arbitrary fiction" 266 f.: "Mind" and "reason" are "fictional syntheses and unities" 272 and are even deprecated (275) as "useless fictions". "'Subject' is a fiction implying that many similar conditions in us are the effect of a *substratum*. . . . This is to be denied" 282, "the subject is not a thing that has an effect, but merely a fiction", 286; in man "we have imagined a *primum mobile* that does not exist

pregnant thought, which comes from the later Stoics, is also found *Ibid.*, 282: "To regard our manner of living and acting as a part in a play, including therein our maxims and principles . . ."

²¹ The expression 'fiction' is also found in the two first periods occasionally, but in a derogatory sense, e.g. in Vol. II, 355 he speaks of the fictions upon which the Medieval Church rested and IV, 99 the fiction of the general concept "man".

at all" 368. "This artificial freeing and explaining of the *ego* as something in and for itself" has had evil consequences (369), among which is the assumption of an inherent "spiritual causation" which is also only a "fiction" 513 and, with it, the assumption "of free actions", which are then separated, into moral and immoral:—this is all "imaginary, unreal and fictional" 369: particularly the concepts on which morality is based 233, 385. But the *genus*, he contends, is as illusory and false as the *ego* 341; into the concepts of *genus*, idea, purpose, etc. a fiction has been read, a false reality (284), and that is why these become bad fictions; in this sense generic concepts are "false unities that have been invented" (330) and the same is true also of the "causal fiction", the "schematism of the thing" 271, 281 and, in general, of all "that is thought" (281). In particular the entire world of Things-in-themselves, the true world of the eternally existent in contrast with the world of becoming, is "a mere fiction" 306; cf. also 288, 291, 294, 304, 310, 311, 408; we "imagine" for ourselves a God in this world (288), accomplish our actions "as if they were the commands of God" (26), and thus arrive at the "bad and petty fictions" of the Christian view (91) at the "fictions of the world beyond" (478). But "we must do battle with all the presuppositions upon which a "true world" has been fictively constructed" 304.

This opposition to the misuse of fictions, dating from the stirring times of the *Götzendämmerung* and the *Antichrist*,²² must not be misunderstood: the necessary complement to it is furnished by numerous other passages which show that Nietzsche had realized the utility and necessity of fictions. This realization is evident also in many fragments of Vol. XV: thus he speaks on p. 175 of the "necessity of false values" and according to p. 338 "necessity, causality, expediency" are "useful illusions", for such "illusions are a ne-

²² In these two works (Vol. VIII) we naturally find similar expressions; thus on p. 77 ff. all categories are designated as "prejudices of the reason", as "lies" and as "empty fictions"—that possess in language and "linguistic metaphysics" a "permanent advocate". The *Ego*, *Free-will*, *Thing*, *Atom*—are "fictions" in the bad sense 94 f., 99. The *Antichrist* attacks all "imaginary" entities, the whole religious "world of fiction" and "the dualistic fiction" 231–233 as mere "lies" in the bad sense (261, 264, 270 f., 281 f., 287, 296 ff.). Similarly in XII, 21–23, 49, 87, 148. From this standpoint Nietzsche (49) attacks the view that man is, on the one hand, adjusted to "perspective vision" and that he can, on the other, possess a consciousness of this deceptive arrangement—which is elsewhere his own doctrine.

cessity if we are to live"; "illusion has a survival-value²³ for us" 303. Logic, which, like geometry and arithmetic, holds only for fictive "entities" (278), is nevertheless a "useful" invention, a good "aid", 273, 275, 288. The categories are "falsifications" but "clever" and "useful means for bringing order into the world" 274, 299, 301: the system of categories, the "system of falsification on principle" is, nevertheless, "a serviceable and handy scheme," a system of necessary "manipulations"²⁴ (300), a "necessary perspectivism". It is with it as with the concept of the atom²⁵: there, as here, it is a question of "pure semiotic", but it is not within our power to change at will our means of expression. "The demand for an adequate method of expression is senseless; it is in the nature . . . of a means of expression to express merely a relation" 324. These concepts are therefore inadequate but useful fictions. This is particularly true of the category of causality 318 ff.²⁶ and still more of the category of substance:

²³ Compare in this connection the magnificent Hymn to Illusion, to the "whole Olympus of Illusion" VIII, 209 and XII, 246 f., 290-293, to the "lie" in the good sense=the creation of myths. Compare XIII, 35: it is a "prejudice", he says, "to believe that the philosopher must fight against illusion as though it were his real enemy". Cf. *Ibid.*, 50, 71, 81, 88 (the perspective illusion as a law of conservation). On p. 130 he says, quite in the manner of Kant: "We are adjusted to optical errors" and we may even ask what is the "most useful belief"=error 207, cf. 121, 124, 138. "The inner processes are essentially productive of error because life is only possible under the guidance of narrowing perspective-creating powers" XIV, 45. "Consciousness is something essentially falsifying"—he says in the same place.

²⁴ "Thought is not a means of 'knowledge' but a means of designating, arranging and manipulating events for our use"; "thought is the cause and the condition both of the 'subject' and of the 'object', as it is of 'substance' and of 'matter', etc." XIII, 51 f. "The inventive power which creates categories is working in the service of our needs, namely of security and rapid intelligibility on the basis of conventions and signs" *Ibid.*, 55. Cf. for such "representative signs" *Ibid.*, 66, 83 ff. Thinking is identical with "creating pictures" 234.

²⁵ Compare in this connection the remarks on pp. 313-321: the concept of the atom is based on the "perspective of consciousness"; "it is consequently, itself, a subjective fiction"; the mechanical view of the world is made possible "by means of two fictions", that of motion and that of the atom. "We need unities in order to calculate, but that does not mean that such unities exist": mechanics is based upon the "picture-language" of "matter, atom, pressure, impulse, gravity" and is, in this sense, a serviceable "semeiotic" "for our use in computation". Cf. also XIV, 45 for "the atomic theory".

²⁶ Cf. also XIII, 60 ff. for the necessary "mythology" of the category of causality and the fictional concepts of soul, atom, etc. which flow from it: here also belong "the fictional unities" of the psychical faculties p. 70.

the "existent" is a "simplification, for practical purposes" (305) based upon the artificial creation of identical cases (291, 304, 319): it is "a picture" introduced by us for practically useful and perspective reasons (322), for "there lies within us an ordering, falsifying, artificially-separating power" (279) whose products, however,—these numerous "falsifications"—are useful and necessary: for "Life is based upon these presuppositions" (287): "The fictional world of subject, substance, reason, etc. is necessary" (279).

This paragraph takes us directly to those thoughts of Nietzsche that might be called the beginnings of a Metaphysic of As-if; with the question, what part illusion plays in the totality of cosmic happenings and how these cosmic happenings, from which illusion is necessarily developed, are to be regarded and evaluated—with this question, the young Nietzsche had already busied himself: we find in the posthumous writing even of the first period the admirable note: "My philosophy is an inverted Platonism: the further it is from actual reality, the purer, more beautiful, and better it becomes. Living in illusion as the ideal" IX, 190: in the same place 198–199 we find Nietzsche struggling with the metaphysical problem of appearance and concluding 205: "The One, in a Greek spirit of gaiety, creates illusion from within itself". In the second period we find the problem deepened: "Our idealistic fantasy-building is also part of reality and must appear in its character. It is not the source, but that is why it is there" XII, 3. "We really know only the Being which conceives" with its falsifying activity. What part does this "performing Being play in general Being? Is all Being perhaps necessarily a conceiving and, consequently, a falsifying? At any rate our conceiving, and with it the erroneous but necessary belief in the unconditioned, "must be deducible from the nature of the *Esse* and from conditioned existence in general" XI, 24–25. This question plays a great part in the third period, and in this way Nietzsche finds himself confronted with Descartes' problem of a deceiving God:—the erroneousness of our conceptual world remains a fact: "We find a superabundance of evidence for that which might seduce us into making guesses at a deceiving principle in the 'nature of things'" VII, 54. "What if God is a deceiver, in spite of Descartes?" XIII, 10: "Let us assume that there is something deceptive and fraudulent in the nature of things. . . . We should, in that case, as a reality, have to participate, to some

extent, in this deceptive and fraudulent basis of things and in its basic will . . ." XIII, 52 f.: "Descartes is not radical enough. In face of his desire to have certainty and his 'I will not be cheated', it is necessary to ask why not?" (*Ibid.*, 56, 68). "The starting-point: irony against Descartes: given that there was something deceiving in the basis of things from which we have sprung, what good would it do *de omnibus dubitare!* It might be the best way of cheating ourselves" XIV, 326. From this it follows that: "The will to appearance, to illusion, to deception . . . is deeper, 'more metaphysical', than the will to truth" *Ibid.*, 369 and "the deceptive perspective character belongs to existence" (*Ibid.*, 40); we must "not forget to include this perspective, assumptive force in 'true Being'" XV, 321: "This creating, logicizing, arranging, falsifying, is the best guaranteed reality" *Ibid.*, 281, "so that we might be tempted to assume that there is nothing else but concept-making, i.e. falsifying subjects."—In the same passage Nietzsche sums up his doctrine in the following monumental words: "Parmenides said: 'We do not think that which is not'—we at the other extreme say: 'What can be thought must certainly be a fiction'" Cf. the very similar passages in Lange (above pp. 335, 337) on the value of that which is non-existent and yet thought, i.e. of appearance. From this standpoint, appearance is no more to be censured and attacked by philosophers as heretofore (cf. VII, 55), and illusion, so far as it proves itself to be useful and valuable and at the same time aesthetically unobjectionable, is to be affirmed, desired and justified. "Perspectivism" is "necessary" for us XV, 321.

This realization of the utility and necessity of fictions would certainly have led Nietzsche, in the course of time, to recognize the utility and necessity of religious fictions also. The question has often been asked where Nietzsche would have been led, in the course of his development, had not the premature catastrophe of 1888 put an end to his development. The answer is: that Nietzsche, after he had so unsparingly revealed the evil side of religious concepts, would necessarily have been led to emphasize their good side also, and to recognize them once more as useful and even as necessary fictions. He was on the direct road thereto. In what has gone before, we have found a number of expressions pointing in this direction, expressions in which he recognizes the histori-

cal necessity of the religious conceptual world.²⁷ Above (p. 353 note), we encountered a remarkable passage, quite reminiscent of Kant, in which it is said that man should not indeed believe in the religious presuppositions of traditional morality but should, nevertheless, act according to them and take them "as regulative", i.e. treat them as regulative fictions. That is also the tendency of a few other remarkable utterances in Vol. XV: not only does Nietzsche recognize that we owe to the religious "illusion" an "artificial strengthening" (429) but he finds the "species man" impoverished now that it is no longer in possession of the power to inject such illusion into reality, is no longer in possession of the power "to fashion fictions"²⁸, has in other words, become "nihilistic" (294). On page 34, he says in his exaggerated language: "Catastrophe: what if falsehood is something divine? Whether the value of all things may not consist in the fact that they are false? Whether we should not believe in God not because he is true, but because he is false? . . . What if it be not just the lying and falsifying, the reading in of meanings,

²⁷ The important and beautiful passage VII, 84 to 90, where the religions are praised in detail as "educative and ennobling means" especially belongs here. It is true that Nietzsche, at the same time, points out "the evil obverse side and holds the religions to account for all the damage they have done. Yet he also says: "There is perhaps nothing in Christianity and Buddhism so worthy of respect as their art of exhorting even the lowliest to transport themselves into a higher illusionary arrangement of things through piety" (cf. p. 320 above, for Kant's similar utterances). This art, it is true, springs from a "will to falsehood at any price" but it is just for that reason that the *homines religiosi* "are to be reckoned among the artists, as belonging to their highest order", among whom, also, "the will to deceive is accompanied by a good conscience" 472. Even in *Antichrist* Nietzsche has, from this point of view, a sympathetic word for the "great symbolist", Christ, and for the "primitive symbolism" of Christianity, though he deplores its development in "ever grosser misunderstanding" (VIII, 259-262). Nietzsche has so little against such myths that he makes a demand for a "myth of the future" XII, 400. As a test of such a future-myth we can interpret the idea of the "eternal recurrence". True enough, Nietzsche meant this at first as hypothetical, then as dogmatic, but, in the end, he himself appears to have interpreted it merely as a useful fiction. In this sense he says of this idea XIV, 295: "Perhaps it is not true". And it is thus possible that O. Ewald (*Nietzsches Lehre in ihren Grundbegriffen*) was right in interpreting this thought as a pedagogical-regulative idea, as G. Simmel also does. The idea of the "superman", too, is a heuristic-pedagogical-Utopian fiction of this sort.

²⁸ This creating, logicizing, putting in order, falsifying, simplifying, arranging, artificially-separating, poetizing, imagining (279, 281, 291) "the perspective, assumptive force" 321 he also calls bluntly, but very appropriately, "the error-desiring force within us (291), and (293) "the will to deception".

which constitutes a value, a sense, a purpose?" And in a remarkable aphorism he sets to the credit of the nineteenth century, as contrasted with the eighteenth, whose "spectre" was reason, the "strength" of which it gave proof in again becoming "more tolerant" towards religion: "We do not hide from ourselves the obverse of evil things": "Intolerance towards priests and the church" has decreased; even the objection of the rationalists, that it is immoral to believe in God "we regard as the best justification of this belief"—because religious fictions in their capacity as myths should no more be measured by a moral standard than by a logical one.

These utterances are the harbingers of a wider and final period of Nietzsche's development which was cut short by his illness. Nietzsche would inevitably have gained the road taken by the Kant he so completely misunderstood and also followed by F. A. Lange, the Lange by whom he had been so much influenced in his youth. He would not have revoked his *Antichrist*, whose incisive truths had, once and for all, to be spoken, but he would have presented the "obverse of evil things" with the same relentless frankness: he would have "justified" the utility and the necessity of religious fictions.

NIETZSCHE AS METAPHYSICIAN

MARTIN HEIDEGGER

TRANSLATED BY JOAN STAMBAUGH

"Two thousand years and not a single new God" (1888, *The Anti-christ*)

In *The Will to Power*, in the "work" which is the theme of this lecture course, Nietzsche says the following about philosophy:

I do not wish to persuade anyone to philosophy: it is inevitable, it is perhaps also desirable, that the philosopher should be a *rare* plant. I find nothing more repugnant than didactic praise of philosophy, as one finds it in Seneca, or worse, Cicero. Philosophy has little to do with virtue. Permit me to say that the scholar and scientist, too, are fundamentally different from the philosopher. What I desire is that the genuine concept of the philosopher should not utterly perish in Germany. (WP 420, Kaufmann tr.).

When he was twenty-eight years old and a professor in Basel, Nietzsche wrote:

Philosophers come on the scene in times of great danger—when the wheel rolls faster and faster—philosophers and art take the place of the disappearing myth. But they are far in advance of their time because their contemporaries are slow to take notice of them. A people conscious of its dangers produces genius.

"The will to power"—this term plays a double role in Nietzsche's thought:

1. It serves as the title of Nietzsche's major philosophical work which he planned and prepared for years, but never carried out.

2. It names that which constitutes the fundamental character of all beings. "The will to power is the last fact that we come down to" (XVI, 415).

From *Nietzsche*, by Martin Heidegger. 12 pages from volume I translated for this volume by Joan Stambaugh, a student of Heidegger's at Heidelberg University who now teaches at Hunter College, C.U.N.Y. Copyright in the English translation © 1973 by Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc. Printed by permission of the publishers.

It is easy to see how both uses of the term "will to power" are connected; only because the term plays the second role can and must it take over the first as well. As the name for the fundamental character of all beings, the term "will to power" answers the question what beings are. From time immemorial this question has been *the* question of philosophy. Thus, the name "will to power" must find a place in the title of the main philosophical work of a thinker who says: all beings are actually the will to power. If the work bearing this title is to be the main philosophical edifice for Nietzsche, for which *Zarathustra* is only the entrance, this means that Nietzsche's thought moves on the long line of the ancient leading question of philosophy, the question of what beings are.

But is Nietzsche then not at all so modern as the commotion surrounding him would seem to indicate? Is Nietzsche then not at all so revolutionary as he himself seems to act? The dissipation of these fears is not a pressing matter and can be put aside. However, pointing out that Nietzsche stands within the line of questioning of Western philosophy should only make it clear that Nietzsche knew what philosophy is. Such knowledge is rare. Only great thinkers have it. The greatest have it in its purest form of a continued question. The fundamental question, i.e., the question that became the foundation stone of philosophy, is the question about the essence of Being; it has never been developed in the history of philosophy as such. Nietzsche, too, remains within the preliminary domain of that question.

It is the task of this lecture course to clarify the fundamental position within which Nietzsche develops and answers the leading question of Western thought. This clarification is necessary in order to prepare the way for a discussion with Nietzsche. If it is true that the tradition of Western thought up to now gathers and completes itself in a decisive perspective in Nietzsche, then to come to grips now with his work means to come to grips with the tradition of Western thought.

The discussion with Nietzsche has not yet begun nor have the presuppositions been established for such a discussion. Up until now Nietzsche has either been praised and imitated, or scolded and exploited. Nietzsche's thinking and saying is still too close to us. He and we are not yet sufficiently separated historically for a distance to be formed from which an appraisal of this thinker's philosophical strength can ripen.

Such appraisal is genuine criticism. It is the highest and the only way to truly appreciate a thinker. For it sets about to fol-

low his thinking step by step in its live power, not in its weaknesses. To what purpose? In order that we ourselves may become free for the highest exertion of thinking through such examination.

But for a long time the German holders of chairs in philosophy have said that Nietzsche is not a strict thinker but a "poet-philosopher." Nietzsche doesn't belong to the philosophers who only think through abstract shadowy things withdrawn from life. If one has to call him a philosopher, he must be understood as a "philosopher of life." This label, which has been popular for a long time, is at the same time supposed to nourish the suspicion that otherwise philosophy is for the dead, and can thus really be dispensed with. Such a view completely agrees with the opinion of those who welcome in Nietzsche the "philosopher of life" who has finally swept away abstract thinking. These commonplace judgments about Nietzsche are false. The error is recognized only when a discussion with Nietzsche gets started together with a discussion which moves in the realm of the basic question of philosophy. To begin with, however, a statement of Nietzsche should be cited which was written during the time when he was working on *The Will to Power*. It reads: "Abstract thinking is laborious for many people,—for me, on good days, a celebration and intoxication" (XIV, 24).

Abstract thinking a celebration? The highest form of existence? Indeed. But at the same time we must notice what Nietzsche means by celebration, which he can think of only in terms of his fundamental interpretation of all being, in terms of the will to power. "Celebration includes: pride, exuberance, high spirits; mockery of everything serious and Philistine; a divine affirmation of oneself out of animal plenitude and perfection—one and all, states which the Christian cannot honestly welcome. *Celebration is paganism par excellence*" (WP 916, Kaufmann tr. with minor changes). We may add: There is thus never the celebration of thinking in Christianity, that is, there is no such thing as Christian philosophy. No true philosophy can determine itself from an extraneous perspective. Thus there is also no such thing as pagan philosophy, especially since "the pagan" still remains something Christian . . . namely the counter-Christian. The Greek thinkers and poets can hardly be called "pagans."

Celebration needs a long and careful preparation. We wish to prepare ourselves for this celebration in this semester even if we do not attain the festival, even if we only surmise the

beginnings of the festival of thinking and experience what reflection is and what distinguishes being *at home* in genuine questioning.

Nietzsche as thinker of the completion of metaphysics

We know who Nietzsche *is* and above all who he *will be* when we are capable of thinking that thought for which he coined the phrase "the will to power." Nietzsche is that thinker who trod the *path* of thought to *the will to power*. We shall never find out who Nietzsche is through a historical report about the history of his life, nor through a presentation of the content of his writings. We do not want to know and ought not to know who Nietzsche is if we mean by that only his personality and historical figure and psychological object and what he produced. But didn't the last work which Nietzsche himself completed for publication bear the title *Ecce Homo*? How one becomes what one is? Doesn't *Ecce Homo* read like his last will: one should concern oneself with him, with this man, and let oneself be told the content of the sections: "Why I am so wise. Why I am so intelligent. Why I write such good books. Why I am a destiny"? Don't we see here the peak of unrestrained self-portrayal and a boundless narcissism?

It is an easy and thus common procedure to understand this self-publication of his own nature and will as the harbinger of incipient insanity. But *Ecce Homo* deals neither with Nietzsche's biography nor with the personality of "Mr. Nietzsche." It deals with a "destiny"—not of the fate of an individual, but rather of the history of the modern era as the end of Western culture. But there also belongs to the destiny of this one bearer of Western destiny the fact that everything that Nietzsche wanted to attain with his writings turned into its opposite (at least up to now). Against his innermost will Nietzsche became the goad and advocate of an overwrought, mental, physical, and spiritual self-dissection and diabolical self-display of men, whose final, mediate effect of this was an unlimited publication of all human activity in the medium of the "audio-visual," through photomontage and reporting: a phenomenon of a planetary character which shows quite the same features in America and Russia, in Japan and Italy, in England and Germany, and which is strangely independent of the will of individuals, of the kind of nations, governments, and civilizations.

Nietzsche made himself into an ambiguous figure and he had to do so within the scope of his time and ours. It is up to us to grasp what is prophetic and unique, what is decisive and final behind this ambiguity. The first condition for this is to look away from the "man," equally so from his "works" insofar as they are the expression of being human, that is, insofar as they are looked at in the light of man. For even the work as work remains closed to us as long as we furtively search in some way for the "life" of the man who created the work instead of asking about Being and the world upon which alone the work is based. Neither Nietzsche's personality nor his work concerns us when we make them and their relation the object of a historical and psychological report.

What must concern us exclusively is the trail which the path of thought to the will to power has traced into the history of Being, which means: into the hitherto untrod regions of future decisions.

Nietzsche belongs to the essential thinkers. With the name "thinker" we name those individuals chosen among men who are destined to think a single thought—this thought always "about" *beings as a whole*. Every thinker thinks but a *single* thought. This thought needs neither praise nor effect in order to gain dominance. In contrast to the thinker, writers and scholars "have" many, many thoughts—that is, ideas which can be translated into specially precious "reality" and which are also evaluated only according to this capacity for transformation.

The single thought of a thinker, however, is of such a nature that all beings revolve around it unpremeditatedly and unnoticed in the most silent stillness. Thinkers are the founders of that which never becomes visible in any kind of shape, which can never be historically told nor technologically calculated. Yet, it rules without needing power. Thinkers are always one-sided, namely directed toward that single side which was apportioned to them by a simple phrase in the early beginnings of the history of thought. The phrase comes from one of the oldest thinkers of the West, Periander of Corinth, one of the "seven sages." This phrase reads: *meleta to pan*—"Take into your care beings as a whole."

The essential thinkers are those whose sole thought tends in the direction of a single and highest decision, either preparing for this decision or accomplishing it definitively. The untrustworthy and pretty well used-up word "decision" is used today with special relish for situations where everything

has long since been decided or at least is thought to have been decided. The almost fantastic misuse of the word "decision" cannot ignore that word's content by virtue of which it is related to the most inward discrimination and the most extreme distinction. This, however, is the distinction between beings as a whole, including gods and men, world and earth, and Being whose dominance alone grants or denies to each being that it be *that* being which it is able to be.

The highest decision which can come to pass and which in each case becomes the ground of all history is that between the primacy of beings and the dominance of Being. Thus, whenever and however beings as a whole are expressly thought, thinking stands in the dangerous scope of this decision. This decision is never made and carried out by man. The way *it* turns out and is carried out far rather decides about man and in a different way about god.

Nietzsche is an essential thinker because he thinks in an emphatic sense and doesn't dodge the decision but moves in its direction and prepares its arrival without comprehending its hidden scope and mastering it.

For this is the other factor distinguishing the thinker: that only through his knowledge does he know why he *cannot* know much that is essential. But we may by no means confuse this knowledge of not-knowing and as not-knowing with that which, for example, is acknowledged in the sciences as the limit of cognition and the limitations of our knowledge. One thinks of the fact that the human capacity for knowledge is finite. Ordinary knowing stops with the not-knowing of what is still knowable. The thinker's essential knowledge begins with the knowing of the unknowable. The scientist questions in order to reach serviceable answers. The thinker questions in order to ground the *questionability* of beings as a whole. The scientist always moves on the foundation of what has already been decided: that there is nature, that there is history, that there is art, that all of these can be made the object of observation. There is no such thing for the thinker. He stands within the decision of what there is at all and what beings are.

Nietzsche stands within a decision just like all Western thinkers before him. With them he affirms the primacy of beings over Being without knowing what is at stake in such an affirmation. But at the same time Nietzsche is that Western thinker who unconditionally and finally brings about the affirmation of this primacy of beings and thus comes to

stand in the hardest sharpness of the decision. This can be seen by the fact that Nietzsche thinks in the direction of the completion of the modern age with his single thought of the will to power.

Nietzsche is the transition from the preparatory time of the modern age—measured historically, the time between 1600 and 1900—to the beginning of its completion. We do not know the extent of this completion. It will probably be either very short and catastrophic or else very long in the sense of an arrangement of what has been attained which becomes more and more durable. There will no longer be any room for halfway measures in the present stage of planetary history. History is essentially grounded in a decision which it does not itself make and can never make of itself; this is true of every age of history in its own form of emphasis. Only from here do the ages receive their own historical definition.

With regard to the decision between the primacy of beings and the dominance of Being, that is, the affirmation of that primacy, the Western tradition up to now has developed and expanded in a thinking which can be characterized by the name of "metaphysics"—"physics" means the "physical" in the original Greek meaning of *ta physei onta*—"beings which exist and as such come into being and are present by themselves." "Meta" means: away from and beyond something . . . here: over and away from beings. Whither? Answer: to Being. Metaphysically thought, Being is that which is thought *in terms of* beings as their most universal determination and *in the direction of* beings as their ground and cause. The Christian idea of a causation of all beings by a first cause is metaphysical, particularly the Greek metaphysical version of Old Testament creation. The Enlightenment's idea of a government of all beings by world reason is metaphysical. Beings are thought to be that which demands an explanation. Each time beings are in priority as the criterion, as the goal, as the actualization of Being. Even when Being is thought in the sense of an "ideal" for beings, as *what* and *how* beings are to be, and though individual beings are subordinated to Being, this *ideal* of the whole is still in the service of beings just as every power is most dependent upon that which it overpowers. But it belongs to the essence of all genuine power to overlook this dependency, to have to do so, to never be able to admit it.

Metaphysics thinks beings as a whole in accordance with their priority over Being. From the Greeks to Nietzsche all

Western thinking has been metaphysical thinking. Every age of Western history is grounded in its own metaphysic. Nietzsche thinks ahead toward the completion of the modern period. His path of thought to the will to power is the anticipation of that metaphysics which supports the modern period completing itself *in* its completion. "Completion" does not mean a last addition of the part still lacking, does not mean the final filling up of a gap which had not yet been abolished. Completion means the unbounded development of all the essential powers of beings long since stirred up to that which furthers them as a whole. The metaphysical completion of an age is not the mere petering out of something already familiar. For the first time and from the outset it is the unconditional and total preparation of what is unanticipated and can never be anticipated. In contrast to what has been, the completion is new. Thus, it is never seen and comprehended by those who only calculate backwards.

Nietzsche's thought of the will to power thinks beings as a whole in such a way that the metaphysical ground of history of the present and future age becomes visible and at the same time decisive. The determining mastery of a philosophy cannot be measured according to what is verbally known about it, nor by the number of its "disciples" and "followers," least of all by the "literature" stemming from it. Even when Nietzsche is no longer known by name, that which his thinking had to think will prevail. Care moves every thinker who thinks in the direction of the decision and consumes him with a need which cannot yet be felt and experienced in the thinker's lifetime, in the circle of his influence which can be historically ascertained but is not genuine.

With his thought of the will to power Nietzsche anticipates the metaphysical ground of the completion of the modern age. Metaphysical thinking completes itself in the thought of the will to power. Nietzsche, the thinker of the thought of the will to power, is the *last metaphysician* of the West. The age whose completion unfolds in his thought, the modern age, is an end period. This means an age in which at some point and somehow the historical decision is raised whether this end period is the finish of Western history or the counterpart of another beginning. To tread Nietzsche's path of thought to the will to power means to encounter this historical decision.

Unless one is forced to come to grips with Nietzsche, the pensive reflection which follows Nietzsche's thought can only

have the aim of consciously approaching what is "happening" in the history of the modern age. What is happening means: what supports and coerces history, what occasions chance happenings and prepares resolutions in advance, what basically is *that* which is within objectively and orientatively represented beings. We never find out what happens through historical observation of what "occurred." That which "occurs" is what passes us by in the foreground and background of the public stage of events and changing opinions. What happens can never be made historically comprehensible. It can only be known reflectively in the comprehension of that which every metaphysic, predetermining the age, brings to thought and words. What one usually calls Nietzsche's "philosophy" and diligently compares with previous philosophy is a matter of indifference. What has become expressed in Nietzsche's thought of the will to power as the ground of history is that what happens in the form of the modern period of Western history is inevitable.

Whether we include Nietzsche's "philosophy" in our cultural possession or ignore it doesn't make any difference. The only fatal thing would be if we simply "occupied" ourselves with Nietzsche, lacking the resolution to genuine questioning, and wanted to take this "pastime" for a thoughtful dialogue with Nietzsche's single thought. Univocal rejection of all philosophy is an attitude which always deserves respect, for it contains more of philosophy than it realizes. A mere toying with philosophical thoughts—that from the beginning never gets involved because of its multifarious reservations—for the purpose of intellectual entertainment or refreshment is contemptible. It doesn't know what is at stake in the path of thought of a thinker.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ZARATHUSTRA

HENRY DAVID AIKEN

1.

Thus Spake Zarathustra is Nietzsche's most famous book; it was also his own favorite. In his philosophical autobiography, *Ecce Homo*, he tells us how, during his walks around the Gulf of Rapallo in 1883, "All *Zarathustra*, and particularly *Zarathustra* himself as a type, came to me—perhaps I should rather say—invaded me." *Zarathustra*, as he says, is an "inspired" work, and if it is not as "utterly unique" as he imagined, it nonetheless stands apart from his other works. For one thing *Zarathustra* is the most imaginatively conceived and the most constructive of Nietzsche's writings. The familiar, devastating critique of existing institutions and beliefs is there of course, but it is never permitted to obscure the more positive ideals with which, henceforth, Nietzsche was increasingly preoccupied. For another thing, *Zarathustra* is written, in large part, in what Nietzsche called the language of dithyramb rather than in the hard, terse, lucid prose for which he is justly celebrated. This partly accounts for the fact that in *Zarathustra* the meaning of individual sentences and even of whole sections is sometimes obscure, although the drift of the book as a whole should be plain enough to an informed reader.

Thus Spake Zarathustra must be regarded as a philosophical poem, an obsolescent genre in which few poets and no philosophers in the modern age have attempted to write. Because of this it is difficult for the contemporary reader to approach it in the spirit intended. As a poem, it requires to be read as a work of imaginative literature, and hence with a constant awareness that *Zarathustra* is not Nietzsche but, as he says, a "type" whose discourses and myths and rants are therefore to be viewed as expressions of *Zarathustra's* own responses to the imaginary situations in which his creator places him. That they may be also expressions of Nietzsche's own attitudes and commitments is not to be denied, but they can be ascribed to him only indirectly and at a distance. In a

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writer whose style and thought are ordinarily so intensely personal, this is a cardinal fact which the reader must never permit himself to forget.

As a literary creation, Zarathustra thus stands between Nietzsche and the reader as an independent voice. Let the reader identify himself too closely with Zarathustra—and for angry young men this is all too easy to do—and Nietzsche becomes liable to a charge not unlike that which the Athenians brought against Socrates: corruption of the youth. On the other hand, if the reader identifies Zarathustra too closely with Nietzsche, the latter is reduced, no less unfairly, to one of his *personae*. Zarathustra, let us face it, is something of an oracle and something of a fool—although to be sure a preternaturally acute fool. At times he reminds us of a still more garrulous Polonius whose pretentiousness and bombast are impossible to take seriously. Many of his jokes and puns are—to use a Nietzschean phrase—simply “bad air,” and some of his affectations—witness his views about women—are disagreeably callow, full of the very “resentment” which Nietzsche so deplored. But if Zarathustra himself is less than godly, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, taken as a whole, is an intensely serious book, and the issues raised in it are of the utmost importance to anyone who, like Nietzsche, is disposed to undertake, at one and the same time, a radical critique of Western culture and a radical reëxamination and overhaul of himself.

As philosophy, *Zarathustra* somewhat resembles a Platonic dialogue: that is to say, its ideas are developed dialectically rather than analytically, and our primary interest lies in the dialectic itself rather than in any specific conclusions reached in the process. In short, it is the movement of the thought and the variable moods attending this movement, rather than any “doctrines” formulated along the way, that we find ultimately absorbing. Some of Nietzsche’s commentators have tried to educe a kind of philosophical system from his writings. Such an effort is even more misguided in the case of *Zarathustra* than in that of his other works. We have Nietzsche’s own word for it that he was radically opposed to any and all systems of philosophy. The world did not appear to him as a cosmos, ordered by an indwelling *Logos*; nor did man appear to him as essentially the rational animal, instinct from birth with a definitive final cause, whose realization it is the fate of all men in all generations to try to attain. Rationality is an achievement, not a metaphysical necessity.

Each individual, like each age, is something new under the sun, and the "higher" the man the more does he become a law unto himself. The wisdom of philosophy, or at any rate any philosophy with which Nietzsche could associate himself, does not consist in any theory or creed, but in liberation from all creeds and indeed from the need of all justifying principles for the conduct of life. In one sense, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is precisely the story of such a liberation.

In saying all this, I should perhaps emphasize that it is no part of my intention to "save" Nietzsche from Zarathustra, as some embarrassed admirers have attempted to do, or to relieve him from responsibility for Zarathustra's sayings. In his other works, Nietzsche frequently says things in his own voice that are no less horrendous than some of those he puts into Zarathustra's mouth. My point is rather that, whatever its imperfections either as philosophy or as imaginative literature, the form in which *Thus Spake Zarathustra* was cast made possible a fuller and freer projection of, as well as release from, the tensions between Nietzsche and his "anti-self" than he could usually achieve in his more argumentative "prose" writings. In the latter works, where Nietzsche perforce speaks in the first person, he commonly presents himself to us in the stance of a doctrinaire: that is, as a writer of mere opinions or prejudices. In them, indeed, he seems at times to be so busy "making points" that the process of reflection and self-development which most concerned him is forgotten, with the result that, so far as the reader is concerned, he defeats his own purpose.

In *Zarathustra*, however, the ever-recurrent and combative ego, which elsewhere Nietzsche seems to be trying to impose upon the reader, is for once submerged in the creative life, or world, of the work itself. And for this very reason, by what is only an apparent paradox, Nietzsche's whole self is able to disport itself more freely and—to adopt another favorite term of Nietzsche's—more powerfully than in his more explicitly didactic works. In *Zarathustra* the phantasmagorias, the shifting moods, the contradictions, and even the gibberish all belong essentially to the "picture" which, as a whole, is more compelling, more authentic, and more trustworthy for their presence.

In the other writings we have the aphoristic distillate; we do not know entirely what ingredients went into the production of each. In *Zarathustra*, so to say, Nietzsche exposes the life from which the distillate was made. In it there is no longer

mere talk about joy and the overcoming of resentment, but rather the presentations of resentment and its overcoming and of the consequent happiness and self-mastery. In the other works the spirit of Dionysius is invoked; in *Zarathustra* it actually takes possession of the writing itself, and because of this it also possesses us. For these reasons, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* strikes us immediately as the openest, least inhibited of Nietzsche's works.

What this means is that *Zarathustra* is not only the most deeply disturbing and, in one sense, dangerous of Nietzsche's books; it is also, when properly read, the most illuminating and instructive. But its instruction will be received only by those who, like Nietzsche and unlike Plato (for whom Nietzsche had only a very qualified admiration), know how to find instruction in a work of art. From this standpoint, Nietzsche's other mature writings are perhaps best viewed as preparations for or as glosses upon *Zarathustra*.¹ They often help to light up its darker passages or to qualify impressions which a casual or unfriendly reading of *Zarathustra* may easily convey. It should be added, however, that there is also a danger in relying too heavily upon them for such purposes. For one must bear in mind that Nietzsche's thought underwent a development both before and after the writing of *Zarathustra*; and ideas which, in his earlier work, he was merely trying out or which, in his last works, he recast in quite different terms, do not always have the same meaning which they have in *Zarathustra*.²

2.

As Nietzsche informs us in *Ecce Homo*, the first three parts of *Zarathustra* were composed, with incredible rapidity, in periods of ten days each during the year 1883. The writing of the fourth part, which stands artistically somewhat apart

¹ This is not meant, of course, to deny that they are works of great distinction and interest in their own right.

² This last statement applies particularly to two conceptions by which Nietzsche sets great store: namely, the will to power and the enigmatic eternal recurrence. So far as they concern *Zarathustra*, I shall have something to say about them toward the end of this Introduction. I should add in passing that Nietzsche's works, including *Zarathustra* in this instance, were done a great disservice by Nietzsche's sister when she published after his death a miscellaneous collection of jottings under the title, *The Will to Power*, with the mistaken suggestion that here, at last, Nietzsche's philosophy is to be found in its definitive form. Quite the reverse is true.

from the rest, was more interrupted, although this fact is not apparent to the reader. Originally, according to Nietzsche's sister (on other matters an exceedingly untrustworthy "authority" concerning Nietzsche and his ideas), there were to be a fifth and sixth part, between which and the first three the fourth was to stand as a kind of interlude. But when the fourth part was finished in February 1885, Nietzsche called it the last.

To my mind he was right to do so, for the work, as it stands, is quite long enough—as some may think, too long—and the fourth part, which is something more of a "story" and less a collection of "Zarathustra says" than its predecessors, brings the work to a powerful, complex, and affecting close. Some may perhaps be disposed to find in it, with its famous "Drunken Song" which is in reality a kind of Song to Joy, a certain analogy to the fourth, choral movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. A better analogy, to my mind, would be the wonderful whirling, dancing finale of the big C Major Symphony of Schubert, with its own "great noontide" glow and strength and its gloriously exuberant coda. If still other readers find both comparisons equally far-fetched, then they may be reminded that it was Nietzsche himself who suggested that "the whole of *Zarathustra* may be classified as music" and that "one of the conditions of its production was a renaissance in [him] of the art of hearing."

Perhaps one who is on Nietzsche's side in his famous essay, *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, may be permitted to add that it is also a truer "music" than Wagner wrote in the music dramas that occasioned Nietzsche's break with him. What Nietzsche wanted of music—"easy, bold, exuberant, self-assured rhythms" and "golden, tender . . . melodies" that make life lose its gravity—he himself gives us in *Zarathustra*, especially in the fourth part. And if he does not entirely succeed in emulating the spirit of Mozart—"the cheerful, enthusiastic, tender, enamored spirit of Mozart, who was no German and whose seriousness is a gracious, a golden seriousness and *not* the seriousness of a German philistine"—if, in short, there are in Nietzsche and in *Zarathustra*, at times, a sickness and a "chaos" resonant of that which he finds in Wagner, this is partly owing to his sense of the lateness of the day in which he wrote. This is a fact that Nietzsche, for all his nostalgic yearning for the Enlightenment and "the South," could never forget. And because of it, as he knew, Mozart's ease and integrity, his divine simplicity and wholly beguiling

charm could not be for him. What he does offer us is a depth and a complexity that in their own way are beyond the reach of the Enlightenment.

Thus *Spake Zarathustra*, despite Nietzsche, is in fact a high product of late romanticism—of the “romantic enlightenment,” as Professor Geoffrey Clive illuminatingly calls it; nor will this statement be taken as a derogation either of the work or of its author by anyone who is aware of not only the limitations but also the achievements of the age of romanticism. Nietzsche is sometimes represented as a willful traitor to the ideals of the age of reason which he professes to admire. Nothing could be further from the truth. The truth is rather that, despite his admiration and love of that great epoch, Nietzsche *existed*, as well he knew, in another time whose problems, and therefore whose solutions, the master minds and artists of the earlier age could but dimly perceive. For Nietzsche there could be no question of going back to Kant or Voltaire or even Goethe; he could not have done so in any case, but at his best, when he was in fullest control of his own powers, he did not wish to. His task, as *Zarathustra* makes evident, was to bring a *new* enlightenment and order into his own life and thought—an enlightenment, therefore, which could be no mere reapplication of the principles or the styles which the older masters exemplified. This point becomes especially clear, I may add, in the section entitled “Old and New Tables” in the Third Part.

Of course Nietzsche did not wholly succeed; perhaps, given his situation and character—his “fate”—it was impossible that he should wholly succeed. But success, like grace, is a gift of the gods, and, as neither Nietzsche nor Zarathustra can forget, the gods are dead. The remarkable thing is that, in his own way and on his own ground, he still attempted—and achieved—so much. Of course *Zarathustra* displays, intermittently, the same wearisome, souped-up intensity and meretricious theatricality which he found so distasteful in the later Wagner; the difference is that, unlike Wagner, Nietzsche was aware of these qualities in himself, that he understood what they meant, and that he struggled so powerfully and movingly against them. The same is true, more or less, of Zarathustra; Zarathustra is by no means unself-critical; just the contrary. And the weird, anguished, nihilistic fits into which he sometimes falls become all the more significant precisely because he himself regards them as signs of impotence. In one way, indeed, the whole point of Zarathus-

tra's ideals of "over-going" and "self-surpassing" would be lost if he himself did not also suffer from or recognize that he suffers from the "human, all-too-human" weaknesses against which he preaches.

However, the morbid side of *Zarathustra* can easily be overemphasized. The fact is that although it is a product of Nietzsche's philosophical maturity, written not so many years before the onset of his madness, *Zarathustra* strikes one from the outset as a youthful, one might almost say a young man's book whose exuberance and playfulness are far more consistently in view than its occasional signs of world-weariness, debility, and—if the word is not misunderstood—disintegration. Its "indiscretions" seem as a rule to stem more from immaturity than from decadence, loss of balance, or faltering control. And on the whole, one's memory of it is of a smiling and at times wildly jocular work whose "boyish blasphemies," as Santayana called them, seem to come primarily from an excess of high spirits and an adolescent delight in poking unholy fun at the sacred cows of our Western tradition. In this connection it is significant that, as Nietzsche tells us in *Ecce Homo*, "in order to understand the Zarathustra-type you must first be quite clear as to its prime physiological condition, a condition I choose to call great healthiness"; it also represents, so he claims, "a new healthiness, a stronger, keener, harder, bolder, merrier healthiness than any that has been seen up to this time."

Paradoxically, however, the years during the production of *Zarathustra* were, except for the blessed ten-day periods of writing, a time of "unparalleled misery" for Nietzsche. The qualities of mind and body (*Zarathustra* is forever talking about "dancing," "running," and "climbing") which he apotheosizes in his book are therefore not so much temperamental as creative and, in the best sense, moral. Temperamentally and physically, Nietzsche was in most ways almost the reverse of his *Zarathustra*; that is to say, he was a retiring, diffident, and intolerably lonely intellectual. He was also a great hypochondriac who suffered, among other things, from migraine headaches, chronic constipation, and bad eyesight. He took drugs, unfortunately, for his terrible insomnia (with Nietzsche's talk about the delights of sleep), but essentially he was something of a puritan who neither smoked nor drank. His eventual insanity, which came upon him very suddenly, was allegedly due to a venereal infection contracted in his youth. But this is now regarded as uncertain, and it was

a well-concealed fact that his father, who died prematurely at the age of thirty-six, had "softening of the brain."

Nietzsche, at any rate, was something of an ascetic in his personal life, and his famous, abortive love affair (if that is what it was) with Lou Salome, who later became the mistress of the poet Rilke and a friend of Sigmund Freud, only underlines the fact that he was no Don Juan. He is said to have proposed marriage to a number of other females, who sensibly turned him down, and the credible suggestion has been made that only the foreknowledge of the fact that he would be rejected made it possible for Nietzsche to propose in the first place. His relations with his sister and his mother were more important, although in both cases, as it now appears, they were exceedingly ambivalent. Plainly, Nietzsche was the antithesis of the dominant male to whom the old woman said, "Thou goest to woman? Do not forget thy whip!"

I mention these frailties and idiosyncrasies here only in order to underline the point that Nietzsche's conception of his work as a philosopher and as an artist was precisely that he must overcome the weaknesses which nature, heredity, and circumstance had inflicted upon him. *Zarathustra* itself is to be viewed as a giant step toward that overcoming, and if the imagery of war sometimes obsesses Nietzsche, it is not hard to understand why. In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche becomes, as it were, his own "new table"; and, from a moral point of view, it is the example of one who, through creative activity, "wills" his own destiny, while at the same time refusing the temptation to will the destinies of those who may claim him as their "master." In Nietzsche's case, as in that of Socrates, discipleship amounts virtually to a contradiction in terms, and those who profess to be his disciples show by that fact that they fail to understand him. Nowhere does *Zarathustra* differ more from the traditional image of Jesus than in his refusal to say to others: "Follow me!"

Nietzsche has many scornful things to say about "free will," but he is in fact the reverse of a fatalist, and his basic lesson is that through self-knowledge and self-culture a man may, if he *wills*, make something of himself, however meagre and intractable may be the materials with which it is his lot to work. Likewise, his notorious idea of the *Übermensch* (of which the common translation, "Superman," is now an unconscionable parody) has little to do either with evolutionary genetics or with the descent of a species beyond man. When in the section entitled "The Higher Man" *Zarathustra* asks,

"How is man to be *surpassed?*," the answer, as a careful reading shows, is not the attempt to breed a new biological species, but a new *life* for existing individuals. Surpassing "man" means here surpassing, through disciplined creative work, the ordinary ruck of men in all ages who "live by the book."

As the wholly "this-worldly" goal of "higher men," the ideal of the *Übermensch* is to be understood only in contrast to the ideals of conformity and "normality" which existing societies impose upon their members, and to the "other-worldly" gratifications which the traditional religions offer us as a lure and compensation for the routine self-sacrifices of ordinary institutionalized existence. The true superman, who, be it remembered, is but an ideal, would be one who, resolutely refusing to withdraw from this world, whether from resentment or fear or a sense of "guilt," has achieved perfect self-fulfillment and hence self-liberation. On this score, at least, there is much in common between Nietzsche's doctrine of the Superman and Spinoza's doctrines of human bondage and human freedom in his *Ethics*. The difference between them is that Nietzsche would repudiate Spinoza's "intellectual love of God" as the higher man's ultimate good.

When Zarathustra proclaims, ironically, that "Man must become better and eviler—so do I teach. The vilest is necessary for the Superman's best," it must be stressed that he is not preaching a version of romantic diabolism, but a rejection of the received theological (and philosophical) doctrines that man, through a Fall, is inherently bad and that only through renunciation of his "wicked" this-worldly desires and aspirations can he hope to save himself. Nor, when Zarathustra counsels, "Live dangerously!," does he mean either "Attempt the impossible!" or "Take yourself to be a Superman!" Least of all does he mean, "Ignore the natural conditions of health and sanity!" On the contrary, in order to forestall such misconceptions Zarathustra explicitly tells us, "Be not virtuous beyond your powers! And seek nothing from yourselves opposed to probability!" Somewhat surprisingly, he even goes out of his way to tell us to "Walk in the footsteps in which your fathers' virtue hath already walked!," for "How would ye rise, if your fathers' will should not rise with you?"

A corresponding point should be made regarding an earlier section, "War and Warriors," which has been much misunderstood, and which should be read only in conjunction with

the one immediately following it, "The New Idol." In the former section Zarathustra says: "Ye say it is the good cause which halloweth even war? I say unto you: it is the good war which halloweth every cause. War and courage have done more great things than charity. Not your sympathy, but your bravery hath hitherto saved the victims." And "What is good?" ye ask. To be brave is good. Let the little girls say: 'To be good is what is pretty, and at the same time touching.'"

This sounds more than a bit like militarism or even Nazism. But in "The New Idol" Zarathustra goes on at once to denounce the state in the most violent terms: ". . . the state lieth in all languages of good and evil; and whatever it saith it lieth; and whatever it hath it hath stolen." The state is "a cold monster" that would set up around itself "heroes and honorable ones" and which would gladly bask "in the sunshine of good consciences. . . ." It is, indeed, "a hellish artifice" and a "death-horse jingling with the trappings of divine honors!" And the masters of the state, the so-called elite, are in fact "superfluous ones" who steal "the work of the inventors and the treasures of the wise," who hate true culture, and who seek only power "and above all, the lever of power, money—these impotent ones!"

Zarathustra concludes "The New Idol" with this prophecy: "There, where the state *ceaseth*—pray look thither, my brethren! Do ye not see it, the rainbow and the bridges of the Superman?" Shades of Karl Marx! Or, rather, shades of the anarchistic ideal which Marx himself placed at the end of his own rainbow. The "heroism" which Zarathustra means to celebrate is clearly not the essentially nihilistic will to death which his more militaristic admirers have imputed to him. Martyrdom, whether in the service of a nation, a race, an imaginary species of supermen, or, above all, "a good conscience," has nothing whatever to do with Nietzsche's conception of greatness.

The Superman is also sometimes mistaken as a frustrated intellectual's anti-intellectualistic ideal of the "well-bred" unreflective man of action who performs great and valorous deeds, usually at other people's expense. But this too is a travesty of Nietzsche's conception as we find it in *Zarathustra*. To be sure, Nietzsche scorns the "scholar" and the "man of learning," but only because he regards him as an essentially unproductive mole that turns up the earth under which his betters have grown their crops. And although he disdains "scientism," Nietzsche has nothing but respect for the crea-

tive scientist and for the knowledge he makes available for the improvement of our understanding and for the control of nature. His point, like that of the pragmatists whom he resembles in so many other ways, is that significant, effectual thinking is itself a "deed." The Western philosophical ideal of intellectuality and rationality is one of super-sensory contemplation which selflessly "mirrors" reality. Such an ideal has nothing to do with serious, scientific thinking; in fact it is nothing more than an intellectualistic version of the gospel of other-worldliness and "saintliness" which Nietzsche opposes in Christianity. He who would truly understand reality must investigate it, study it, and, in the process, do things to and with it.

Like the pragmatists also, Nietzsche wants to know, of any "idea," what fundamental difference it makes. If it makes no difference, it is vacuous. And if the difference it makes, as in the case of the "ideas" of the old philosophers and the learned men, is merely to dispose us to idle "visions" or else endlessly to pore over the old tables that other, better men have fashioned, then that essentially is its meaning. "By their fruits, so shall ye know them!" said C. S. Peirce, the founder of pragmatism, echoing Jesus. And to this Zarathustra, and Nietzsche, would have said, for once, "Amen!" In short, Nietzsche does not intend Zarathustra as an opponent of intellect or of intellectuality, but only of a certain kind of intellectualism which, from his point of view, involves at once a misconception and a misuse of intellectual activity.

Significant ideas are inseparable from significant problems whose solutions, one way or another, make a difference to the conduct of life. Ideally, therefore, the philosopher is not a withdrawn, introverted "thinker," endlessly mulling over the forms of purest Being, but, in Wordsworth's phrase, a "happy warrior" whose words are doings and whose questions, unlike the pointless, compulsive "whys?" of a child or an idle doubter, are meant to disturb us and to alter the existing order of our lives. For Nietzsche, as for the pragmatist William James, the question "Is there a God?" is no merely speculative or theoretical query whose only issue is an objective "Yes" or "No." For both of them it is tantamount to the question, "What difference does the belief, or disbelief, in the existence of God make, and, further, what difference should it make to our lives and to our experience?"

James remained, in spite of himself, an unbeliever, though he was persuaded that belief in God, could one attain it, might

have a saving grace. Nietzsche remained proudly and even defiantly an unbeliever whose joyful atheism was intended as an affirmation of the potential dignity of men (not "man"). He sought to make the most and best of his unbelief through a radical reorientation—he called it a "transvaluation"—of the system of values which has hitherto dominated our Christian civilization. And just as he, like James, employs the imagery and heraldic symbolism of war in a cause which in any ordinary sense is unmilitary, so he invokes the imagery and sometimes the texts of Biblical religion in behalf of goals that in the view of ordinary Christians would be regarded as irreligious.

3.

Still, despite Zarathustra's claim, or prophecy, that "God is dead," neither he nor his creator is, in the root sense, irreligious. In one sense Nietzsche, like James, "*suffered* from incredulity," and it is this fact which distinguishes him from all the dime-a-dozen atheists and agnostics for whom disbelief in the existence of God is hardly more momentous, and no different in essential meaning, than disbelief in the existence of centaurs. So far as our Western theistic tradition goes, Nietzsche is indeed an atheist. The God neither of the prophets nor of the philosophers is his God. He can no more believe in the Author of Genesis than he can take seriously the notion of a First Cause or a Necessary Being. Not conceivably could he *worship* such beings. Yet it would be a radical mistake, in my opinion, to regard Nietzsche, as some do, as merely a somewhat overwrought preacher of the new ethics of naturalistic or scientific humanism, and his secularism must always be viewed vis-à-vis the institutionalized Christian churches of Western Europe.

There is, however, a sense of the term "secularism" which, as it seems to me, has no application to Nietzsche: that is, the sense in which secularism represents a deliberate, anti-spiritual worldliness and materialism. Nietzsche is, or means to be, "this-worldly," but "worldly" is perhaps the last word that could justly be applied to him. In truth, the quality of Nietzsche's thought is incurably religious. And this is so whether God himself is dead or alive. The ordinary secularistic humanist, when past his nonage, simply dismisses religion from his mind along with Santa Claus and, like Voltaire's *Candide*, sensibly turns his attention to the cultivation of his

garden. Not so Zarathustra, and not so Nietzsche. They must raise, or try to raise, a commotion about "the things that are Caesar's." They agonize and sweat, howl and retch, like any God-fearing bishop; they have the bishop's dark nights of the soul and his ecstasies, his feeling of being cast into the Pit and, when the afflatus is on, his sense of being twice-born. And, in a word, they have that constant obsession with first and last things which is the mark of the religious mind.

The comparison with Voltaire is especially illuminating just because, the moment it is made, one sees how remote Nietzsche is from the optimistic, deistic rationalism of Voltaire and his contemporaries. Nietzsche can never leave religion alone; in fact his harping on the theme, in *Zarathustra* as in his other books, gets to be a bore, especially for those for whom God is not only dead but buried. Christianity, if not also Jesus, is an *offense* to Nietzsche, and his role as a self-acclaimed antichrist would be far less interesting to us were it not for the fact that the offense is itself of a religious nature: Christianity, for Nietzsche, is essentially *unholy*.

Nowhere is Nietzsche's essentially religious mentality closer to the surface than in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Indeed, the book can only be regarded as his religious testament. This dimension of the work shows itself unmistakably in the conception, the symbolism, the imagery, the constant Biblical allusions, and the style of *Zarathustra*.³ It shows itself in Nietzsche's incurable tendency to think in terms of paradoxes, and in his inability ever to say quite what one feels him to be trying to say. It is apparent, above all, in the mystical doctrine of "eternal recurrence," the point of which is nothing if not religious. Beyond all this, however, there is the preoccupation through the book with first and last things, with those "ultimate concerns" of life and death, of individual destiny and salvation with which Professor Paul Tillich virtually identifies the religious consciousness. "Away from God and gods . . .," says Zarathustra. "What would there be to create if there were—gods!" Yet Nietzsche says in *Ecce Homo*, in commentary upon the Night Song in the Second Part of *Zarathustra*: "Such things have never been written, never been felt, never been *suffered*; such suffering can be borne only by a God, Dionysius."

But I am not concerned with words, and if some are offended or appalled by my association of the names of

³ I am not, I may add, taken in by the "thees" and "thous" of the common translations.

Nietzsche and Zarathustra with the religious spirit, then let them choose an apter phrase. The point, in another way, is simply that Nietzsche, unlike the lay or secular humanist, invests the spirit of creativity and the ideal of self-transcendence—and hence suffering, which for Nietzsche is inseparable from that spirit and that ideal—with a dimension of holiness and even of awe (there are no other words) which I, at least, take to be hallmarks of the religious attitude. Above all, perhaps, there is that sense of urgency, of seriousness, and of dedication of which the ethical religions of the West—in spite of Nietzsche—are, at their own rare best, essential celebrations. And if anyone should reply that the religious attitude is incompatible with the weird mixture of irony, gaiety, and—the word is Nietzsche's—"drunkenness" which is present in Zarathustra's highest flights of rhapsody, then the only rejoinder is that he has never read attentively the greatest passages in either the Old Testament or the New.

The same may be said also of the greatest plays of the Greek tragedians about whom Nietzsche wrote one of his best and most original books, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche is perhaps the first modern writer on tragedy to stress its religious origins, just as he is also, by no accident, one of the two greatest modern writers on the subject of tragedy. If the truth be told, Nietzsche is himself a philosopher of tragedy, if not also *par excellence* a tragic philosopher. And it is just this fact which in him, as in Beethoven, gives such enormous weight and power to his scherzos. It is not for nothing, I think, that the great "Drunken Song" in the Fourth Part ends with the lines, "*Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit, Will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit.*" Nor is it an accident that the word *Ewigkeit* (eternity) itself should be reiterated again and again like a kind of chant toward the end of *Zarathustra*.

4.

More detailed commentary upon the individual sections of a work as varied and as complex as *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is of course out of place in an introduction such as this. I shall conclude, therefore, with some remarks upon an idea, central to Zarathustra's message, whose meaning, as we encounter it here, is by no means self-evident. This is the idea of "eternal recurrence," a notion which is not original with Nietzsche but which he employs in an extraordinary way. Treated as a "scientific" hypothesis, the doctrine is simply

this: If the number of things is finite, then, granted that space is also finite, it seems to follow that only a finite number of combinations of things is possible; but if time is not finite (having neither beginning nor end), then it also seems to follow that every combination could recur eternally. I say "seems." The doctrine has, to my knowledge, never been rigorously formulated, nor its alternatives precisely explored. In *The Will to Power* Nietzsche himself evidently regarded the theory as "the most scientific of all possible hypotheses." My own impression, however, is that it is a metaphysical doctrine whose fundamental interest is essentially moral and religious. Certainly it seems to be so conceived in *Zarathustra*, where no effort is made to formulate it in exact scientific terms, and where the use made of it has virtually nothing to do with questions of empirical fact.

In order to see what its significance is for *Zarathustra*, and for Nietzsche in *Zarathustra*, we must first return to the point that Nietzsche, of all nineteenth-century philosophers save Hegel, is perhaps the most thoroughly imbued with the "historical consciousness." From this point of view every day is, in some sense, a new day, and every beginning a new beginning. How, then, shall a man try to do anything that may outlast him or plan anything which others will not repudiate as an anachronism? How indeed shall he find any significance in his life except in the momentary gesture which passes and is forever lost? How, in short, can anything be memorable if past time can in no sense be recaptured or future time anticipated?

These questions have haunted serious men since the end of the eighteenth century, that is to say, since the dawn of *history*. And from Hegel to Proust, and from Heine to Toynbee, various attempts have been made to answer or at any rate to face them. Popular collectivistic answers were offered by Hegel, by Marx, and by the Social Darwinists. For Hegel and for Marx, although, so to say, no star will endure, none is absolutely lost since each is dialectically the condition of the occurrence of a bigger and brighter star which will take up and transmute whatever was excellent or good in its predecessor. And in the case of Marx, at least, the dialectic of history will eventually bring mankind to a classless society whose embodiment of the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity will redeem all the miseries and the agonies of those who have been ground to bits in the process. The Social Darwinists, misreading the lessons of the master,

attempted to infer from the thesis that the fittest will survive, the ethical conclusion that whatever and whoever survives is fittest—a monstrous doctrine with which Nietzsche himself barely flirts.

One way or another, however, a great many otherwise responsible and respectable thinkers accepted the view that the process of historical development is at the same time an inevitable progress, and hence that the process itself, regardless of the cost, is finally justifiable.

None of these ways out was possible for Nietzsche. He was at once too great a realist and too deep a pessimist for such vagaries. Nor, as a naturalist who acknowledged the reality of this world as final and absolute, could he accept any form of Christian eschatology. What alternative is there? Well, there is the possibility of eternal recurrence. But how can this be? Initially, such an idea strikes one not as an escape from pessimism and despair but as a monstrous intensification of them. If we had to face living through this life in all its frightfulness and tedium and senselessness, again and again throughout all eternity, could we even endure the thought? Would we not—as Nietzsche himself asks in the work immediately preceding *Zarathustra*, *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (which is variously translated in English as *The Joyful Wisdom* and *The Gay Science*)—throw ourselves down and, gnashing our teeth, curse the day on which we were born?

We might. Suppose, however, that we view the matter in another way. Suppose, in short, that we believed that we had nothing else, forever more, but *this* moment, *this* existence? Would we not, however bitter or painful, view it—or better, *treat* it—as something infinitely precious, infinitely worth preserving? Would we not, in a word, say “Yea” or “Quite” to it and not, like Goethe’s Faust, “Ever, not quite”?

Each of course must answer for himself. However much he may love another, no one can *be* that other, and no one, therefore, can finally answer for him. This is part of Nietzsche’s teaching. It is what made him “the loneliest man in the world”; it is also, in part, what makes him authentically a harbinger of existentialism, though an existentialist of a stripe radically different either from Sartre or from Heidegger. More purely than they, Nietzsche throughout *Zarathustra* rages to *be*. And to Hamlet’s question his instantaneous, noisy, even violent answer is “*Be!*—be, for God’s sake, or for your own sake, or for dancing’s sake, or for suffering’s sake—but *be!*” In other terms, for Nietzsche the

categorical imperative is, "So live each moment that you could will that moment to return eternally!" That, for him, is the meaning of the idea of Eternal Recurrence.

I must end on a soberer note. As Nietzsche himself admitted, he too was a "decadent," albeit a decadent who loathed decadence and struggled mightily against it. For all his love of sanity, there is a quality in *Zarathustra* that leaves us uneasy. Here is indeed the rage to be and the will toward self-overcoming. But we hear little, in *Zarathustra*, of justice, and especially of justice and liberty for all. Zarathustra is not as wise as Nietzsche thinks he is. And though we may defend Zarathustra and Nietzsche against misconceptions of the Superman, we may indeed question whether the endless bridge toward the Superman is one which we should will to cross. Nietzsche, alas, did not know, or else appreciate, the consolations and the self-respect possible to ordinary men in the ordinary way. In a sense he is too religious, too preoccupied with first and last things; at least he is in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Heroism is not the good man's only food, and if he dines on it too exclusively he may—to employ a favorite term of Zarathustra's—find himself nauseated. There is a commoner cheerfulness, a manly quiet and good temper which, because of his own "breeding," Nietzsche scarcely knew. And there is, too, in the performance of duties which one accepts in good conscience, a value which may be worth as much as the pride of those who manage to go "beyond good and evil."

All this, no doubt, the sane, thoughtful reader of *Zarathustra* will finally, perhaps sadly, acknowledge. One well-known interpreter of Nietzsche has insisted, with what looks to be admiration, that Nietzsche's philosophy is essentially apolitical. That, in sum, is just the trouble with it. The State may be, as Emerson (whom Nietzsche much admired) said, a "poor cow," but "one must not begrudge it its hay." So, also, with the other "institutions" whose obligations society imposes upon us.

This said, however, one must be grateful to Nietzsche for sounding another note too rarely heard in our time. And one must be grateful for a tradition which, however much he himself might despise it, makes possible the celebration of his extraordinary books.

MAN AS HIS OWN CREATOR

KARL JASPERS

Man's "freedom" means that his alterability involves more than changes in accordance with those natural laws that apply to all existence: he is responsible for his own transformation.

During the entire course of history this transformation has been brought about by *morality*. We apply the term "moral" to those laws to which human conduct and attitudes have been subjected in order that men may thereby for the first time become what they are. The contemporary world claims to acknowledge Christian morality. When one's faith wavers, he still regards "morality" as self-evident. As modernism becomes godless, it regards morality as a solid ground upon which it still stands and by whose laws it lives.

Nietzsche attacks morality in every contemporary form in which he finds it, not in order to remove men's chains, but rather to force men, under a heavier burden, to attain to a higher rank. He becomes aware that the *value* of morality poses a significant problem. In all the stages of philosophy (even the skeptical), morality was considered to possess the highest value. All creeds were very much alike in this respect. "He who is willing to dismiss God clings all the more firmly to the belief in morality." Consequently, once the problem of morality is posed, it becomes, in Nietzsche's opinion, so radical as to call in question what for thousands of years has been too obvious to be challenged.

By assailing and disavowing the moral law and freedom, both of which have been vital realities within human experience, he hopes to issue *a new challenge* which will arouse what is genuinely and distinctively human. What was called freedom becomes "*creation*" (*Schaffen*). He wishes to substitute "*nature*" for duty, the "*innocence of becoming*" (*Unschuld des Werdens*) for what the Christians call grace and redemption from sin, and *the historical reality of the individual* (*die geschichtliche Individualität*) for what is accepted as universally valid by men in general.

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Nietzsche's Attack on Morality. At any given time his attack depends upon what aspect of morality is under consideration. First of all he takes as his object the fact of the *plurality of moralities* and the possibility of investigating their *origins*, then he passes on to the *claim to absoluteness* which is advanced by moral demands.

The plurality of moralities and their origins: The fact of moral pluralism appears to rob every kind of morality of its supposed universal validity. The singularity and exclusiveness of each kind signifies that no group of moral judgments is to be explained in terms of the existence of the human species, but "rather in terms of the existence of peoples, races, etc., and, in fact, of peoples that have had to assert themselves *in opposition* to other peoples and *classes* which wished to be set off sharply from those in the lower ranks." Hence every distinct kind of morality is historically separate as one historically actualized possibility among others.

Still this argument need not lead Nietzsche to reject morality in its entirety, for a moral demand in its historical singularity might possess compelling and warranted obligatoriness for specific men at specific moments. And it is not necessary to renounce the universal validity of a law for man as man, but only the timeless universal validity of definite contents of that law. The demand for lawfulness in general, understood as agreement with the source of man as such, may remain infeasible, even though its content is inexpressible and the possibilities that it opens to us are numerous.

One should distinguish between moral conduct and moral *judgment* concerning conduct. Nietzsche rejects the truth of moral judgments without qualification. His psychological observations concerning the origin and development of such judgments are inexhaustible. Among other things, he unmasks the pleasure taken in causing pain, the release of impotent instincts for revenge, the habit of furtive self-aggrandizement, the joy in feelings of power, and the mendacity of all moral indignation and the presumptuous judgment in all moral pathos. His magnificent "ridicule of all the moralizing of the present day" is conclusive.

This psychology of the usual moral judgment, instructive as its truth may be to everyone, need not by any means be taken to impugn morality itself. Even though moral judgment—especially judgment passed upon others—may be impossible insofar as it lays claim to dogmatic finality, morality itself

may still, in consequence, remain an even more decisive intelligible actuality.

According to Nietzsche it is the *Socratic* and *Judaean-Christian* morality (which he regards as identical) that is accepted as valid in Europe. He attacks this morality by exposing its origin and development. He refers to it as the "sum of the conditions of survival of an impoverished and partly or wholly ill-grown sort of man." He calls it "slave-morality." The powerless, too, have their will to power: it is "the instinct of the *herd* opposed to the strong and independent, the instinct of the *sorrowful* and poorly endowed opposed to the fortunate, the instinct of the *mediocre* opposed to the exceptional." In spite of their impotence, all of them find in morality the means to mastery and to the creation of an internal (and eventually an external) power. For these moral values are fundamentally evaluations, by inferior people, of behavior patterns that afford them protection; and wherever these values prevail, the existence of their creators and bearers, namely the inferior people, attains increased value while that of the intrinsically powerful and radiant people is depreciated. "The slave-insurrection of morality begins when *resentment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values." Insofar as the strong and successful ones, who are always in the minority, accept the evaluations of the crowd, the powerful are subjugated to the congenitally weak and infirm.

Still, insofar as such arguments from *origin and development* appear in every sense to annul the validity of morality, Nietzsche counters with the statement: "He who has gained insight into the conditions under which a moral judgment has arisen has not thereby even touched upon its value." This value "remains unknown even when one is well aware of the conditions under which it arises."

Such assertions by no means re-establish the view that, in spite of everything, there is an absolutely valid morality; they only show that *some other consideration* must prove decisive in connection with the question of the *value* of any given moral system. For if "no morality is intrinsically valuable," and the concept of morality "is not even so much as relevant to man's worth," still this adverse judgment passed upon morality would be impossible unless *some positive value* were presupposed to provide the standard of judgment. The question is: What is the intention and purpose of Nietzsche's dissolution of morals? He tells us that he wishes to attain "the greatest power, depth, and splendor of which the human type

is capable." But when this demand is stated with such earnestness as that of Nietzsche, it is as decisive and absolute as any moral demand. Consequently his attack is not aimed at morality in general; it is directed at one specific morality from the standpoint of another.

So far as the derivation particularly of *Christian* morality from resentment is concerned, it should be made clear that, on the one hand, many specific occurrences within Christendom are indeed understandable in these terms, while, on the other hand, the moral evaluations that are perverted through resentment are subject to these perversions only because they derive from some other source. Nietzsche himself stopped short (an astonishing fact!) before the figure of Jesus. Here he finds the actualization of a way of life in which everything is genuine and without pretense or falsehood. "Basically there was only one Christian, and he died on the cross." It is an "irony of world-history" that "mankind prostrates itself before the very opposite of the source, significance, and justification of the gospels."

In other words, Nietzsche's attack upon morality first presupposes an *indefeasible value* that is above every special morality (i.e., it presupposes the source of Nietzsche's own morality), and, second, it leaves open the possibility that a spurious morality may have originally come from a genuine source.

Moral claims as unconditional: Nietzsche is confronted with versions of morality—both religious and philosophical—whose demands are *unconditional* and whose contents are taken to be *universally binding*. *Christianity* bases its morality upon the law of God: "Christianity assumes from the outset that man does not and can not know what is good and what is bad for him. Man believes in God who alone knows these things. Christian morality is a command issuing from a transcendent source. It is beyond all criticism; it has truth only if God is the truth. It stands or falls with the belief in God." *Philosophically* morality depends upon itself as a capacity of reason. It does not rest its case upon derivation from anything external, but upon a growing mental awareness of its source in the supersensuous nature of man. It heeds the law, not as a divine command, but as its own demand in which it is at one with itself and with every rational being. What is revealed in morality is not simply the existence of man as a being that is determined in its type by nature, but rather man's transcendent origin.

Nietzsche does not merely deny that moral acts are objectively discoverable (which Kant also denies, since he holds that the rightness of an act does not necessarily attest to its moral character but merely its legality); he also denies the sense and validity of the inner moral demand to act in conformity with the moral law. (Whether this ever really happens or not, i.e., whether morality is actual or simply springs from motives of utility, inclination, and concern with extraneous ends, can, according to Kant, never be objectively settled by empirical means.) Nietzsche goes on to deny not only the universal validity of specific contents of moral demands, but the law of the lawfulness of conduct as being identical with moral conduct itself. He impugns the *unconditionality* of morality—whether in self-sufficient original philosophic form or in the form of its religious derivative—on the following bases:

(1) *Morality as alien to reality*. If morality is *unconditional*, then its demands possess *absolute* validity. Its content must be *discovered* or *heard*, not as an empirical but as an intelligible fact. In opposition to this, Nietzsche asserts: There are no moral facts. Morality is simply a *construction* placed upon certain phenomena; more precisely speaking, it is a *misconstruction*. In other words: "There are no moral phenomena, but only moral interpretations of phenomena." Moral matters have nothing to do with things "in themselves"; they are simply matters of opinion. They are part of the world of appearance.

Now if morality is nothing but interpretation, there must be *something* to be interpreted. *What* could it be that is thus morally interpreted? One of Nietzsche's answers is: "Morality is a sign-language of the feelings," and these feelings in their turn are a sign-language of the functions of everything organic. Early in his career Nietzsche asks whether, like dreams and other psychological phenomena, "our moral judgments and evaluations are only images and phantasies of a physiological process unknown to us." At a later date he provides the answer by saying that he has accustomed himself "to see in all moral judgments a bungling kind of sign-language by means of which certain physiological facts might be communicated."

In this way, Nietzsche expresses in concise biological terms what he calls in the broadest sense *reality*, *actuality*, or *nature*. It is of these that morality provides a sort of *interpretation*. In his attack, he arrives at the conclusion that moral judgments make us falsify ourselves and become less real be-

cause they *pass reality by* and, consequently, lead us astray. Instead of letting us master nature in a natural fashion, morality ensnares us in vain imaginings and thereby makes us fall victim to an unseen and undesired actuality. As a result, so long as we act morally, we, in fact, miss the possibilities that are real to us and thus allow "chance to become a law unto us."

Since morality is alien to the actual and is bound to remain unreal because of the very principle on which it rests, Nietzsche views moral philosophy as nothing more than a creature of the imagination occupying itself with vain conceits: "In the whole history of moral development, truth does not once make its appearance: all its conceptual components . . . are fictions, all its psychological interpretations . . . are falsifications, all the logical formulations which are dragged into this kingdom of lies are sophisms. The badge of the moral philosopher himself is a complete absence of any kind of cleanliness."

In the first place, this attack presupposes that it is possible to know what reality is and also to know that this reality exists in such a way that I can deal with it as something simply given. But still, throughout the whole of Nietzsche's philosophy, *all reality is itself only interpretation*—a kind of exegetical construction beyond whose limitless variations nothing else exists. I have only *one kind* of consciousness of reality; I do *not* know reality as an independent existent outside of myself.

In the second place, Nietzsche presupposes the *absolute value* of this reality which he calls nature. But he cannot maintain this either, insofar as to him every value can be only the value of *one* single reality as a way of interpreting this very reality.

Certain specific aspects of Nietzsche's attack, based upon the irrelevance of morals to reality, appear plausible: he hits upon the psychological truth about certain ways of behaving that pretend to be "moral," points out the ever present disparity in all human conduct between what is intended and willed and what actually occurs as a consequence of the deed, or strikes at the irresponsible practice of acting on principle and producing evil in a blind urge to sacrifice while finding comfort in leaving the successful outcome to God. But the root of the import of the absoluteness that moves men to act is not reached by Nietzsche. In Nietzsche's thought, then, one must always distinguish between the psychological truth that

relates to the specific phenomena of human existence, and philosophic expressions of the truth that concern the source itself, for this latter alone is in question when we wish to come to grips with the roots of morality.

(2) *Morality as contrary to nature.* For morality to be "unconditional" means that it ought to exist only for its own sake. It need not justify itself by reference to something external to which it is a means; rather it is itself the measure of all existing things—the measure by which they are to be accepted or rejected. But to rest the case for the ultimate value of morality upon the formula "morality for morality's sake" is, according to Nietzsche, not only to accept its complete lack of realism, but also to pay the price of devaluating actuality itself. Nowhere does actuality pass the test of morality; adjudged by this test it is simply immoral and opposed to value and, consequently, something which ought not to exist. Like "beauty for beauty's sake" and "truth for truth's sake," "the good for its own sake" is a "form of the evil eye for the actual," "for since life is essentially something immoral, it must constantly and unavoidably be in the wrong from the standpoint of morality (especially Christian, i.e., unconditional, morality)."

Nietzsche concedes that the value-distinctions and rank-orders which morality provides are defensible—but only as rank-orders of that which is actually living and, in this capacity, as indicators of the conditions underlying the existence and progression of some particular form of life. But as revelations of a higher world—which they have to be if they are to be unconditioned—they turn into the very opposite of life and acquire a life-destroying character. To insist that everything become moral "would mean to rob existence of its *greatness*, and to castrate mankind and reduce it to a miserable mass of nondescript Chinamen."

This attack, which claims that morality is "contrary to nature," is annulled however when Nietzsche, reversing himself, also speaks of *morality* as "*part and parcel of nature.*" Everything belongs to nature—even that which appears to be opposed to it. The modifications of nature's existence are very numerous. Of any moral system one can say: "It is a fruit that betrays the soil from which it grew." Morality is thus changed into a mere set of opinions held by one or the other type of man. It is not a source but a consequence—it is itself a product of nature. As such a consequence of the development of a particular type of man, morality in every one of

its forms should be viewed as a natural phenomenon. These two ways of viewing morality—both as contrary to nature and as itself perfectly natural—thus appear to annul one another.

Nietzsche, in seeking to reject any “*unconditionality*,” can do this only on the basis of a new unconditionality. He himself knows this to be unavoidable. Whenever we value something unconditionally our experience is moral, and, contrariwise, whenever our experience is moral in nature, we are dealing with something unconditional. It is “simply not possible to relativize a moral experience; it is essentially unconditioned.” Hence, in unconditionally opposing the value accorded to “nature” to the unconditionality of morality, Nietzsche himself does precisely what he condemns: he pronounces an absolute value-judgment. The basis for “absolutistic morality” expressed in such words as “my evaluation is final” is also the basis on which Nietzsche involuntarily—though knowingly—proceeds.

The Double Circle. The unambiguous arguments against morality can thus all be robbed of their decisive effect by an appeal to certain of Nietzsche’s other tenets. He has a new way of raising critical questions—more ambiguous ones—by moving in inescapable circles. First he asserts that morality is itself a product of immorality, and then he urges that the criticism of morality itself derives from the highest kind of morality.

(1) *Morality as a product of immorality.* Nietzsche believes that, from the very beginning, the moral has come from something immoral, viz., the will to power. Morality “is a special case of actual immorality.” For him this is psychologically discernible in individual cases: “One does not become moral *because* he is moral! Subordination to morality can be slavish, or proud, or selfish, or thoughtless, but intrinsically there is nothing moral about it.” On the contrary “our morality rests on the same foundation of lies and misrepresentation as our wickedness and selfishness.” Historically this can be seen on a grand scale: “All the means by which mankind up to now was to be made moral were fundamentally immoral.” An indication of this is “the *pia fraus*, that heirloom of all philosophers and priests who ‘improved’ mankind. Neither Manu, nor Plato, nor Confucius, nor the Jewish and Christian teachers have ever doubted their *right* to lie.” Consequently “to *create* morality one must have the unswerving will to the very opposite.” “Morality has remained in good standing for so long only thanks to immorality.”

Even if the contentions here argued for were correct in their entirety and not merely to a large extent, they would still not be convincing, since it is true, here as elsewhere, that the manner in which something develops and reaches fruition is not decisive for the significance and value of the finished product. But insofar as it is asserted that all morality in its entirety is a product of development rather than a matter of individual developmental relations, the very meaning of morality as something specific, with a source of its own, is obliterated by a reduction of all being to *one* kind of being (nature, reality). It is not the moral that is unconditioned but rather actual nature.

(2) *The derivation of the critique of morality from the highest morality.* That Nietzsche's radical rejection of morality is itself a consequence of his moral involvement is consciously asserted in the following circle: Moral development is bound to have the result that the truthfulness demanded by *morality* finally calls in question the very morality in which it is rooted; morality becomes suspect for purely moral reasons. Judged by the truthfulness which morality itself demands, morality is reduced to mere semblance, and it therewith forfeits its right to condemn pretence. Thus this "self-overcoming of morality" occurs only in moral men: "The critique of morality represents a high stage of morality." "In us morality achieves its own self-destruction." Just because "one of the highest and most potent efflorescences of the moral sense is the sense for truth itself," morality, by insisting on truthfulness, has "placed around its own neck the noose with which it can be strangled—its own last moral demand is the suicide of morality."

But in these circles the self-assertion as well as the suicide of morality appears. For just as we are left, in the first case, with self-assertive immorality within the circle that reduced morality to a special case of immorality, so, in the second, *morality* becomes the basis for the circle that derives the destruction of morality from *morality itself*. In neither case does the negation strike the heart of the matter, though it presents origins and lines of descent concretely. Without such concrete presentation the circles are merely formal. Their consequence—not logical but rather derived from existential grounds—can be self-sufficiency in self-assertion as well as self-negation through the suicide of morality.

Because Nietzsche's critique of morality transcends the specific and penetrates to the outermost limits, he is in fact

compelled either to annul his statements in consciously constructed *circles* or to leave them standing in unrecognized *contradictory* opposition to each other.

At the start, Nietzsche had intended the two *circles* as attacks whose results would be final: the first by reducing morality itself to its opposite; the second by demanding the rejection of morality on the highest moral grounds. But when Nietzsche views reality (nature) as neither moral nor immoral, but rather as the encompassing being, he is, as a consequence, driven to reject in turn his own condemnation of morality: Moral condemnation is in itself simply a fact within nature; when I now condemn one single thing within nature, I condemn the whole of it, since everything is involved with everything else. It follows that when I condemn this condemnation, as I do, I am doing precisely the thing for which I just reproached those who play the moral judge: I am condemning the whole. I can and must say Yes to nature by affirming even the moral condemnation that I just now rejected. In this circle all positions annul one another, and there is no escape.

But if one retains these positions, they remain in inescapable *contradiction*, so that while one is being expressed the other has to be left out of consideration. We hear that "it is not possible to live outside of morality," as well as the contrary, that "one can live only with an absolutely immoral way of thinking." Or again, morality "is the only interpretative scheme with which man can endure" and, on the other hand, "the world, morally interpreted, is unbearable."

Nietzsche's Demands. If we place before us the *fundamental meaning* of Nietzsche's total attack on morality (something that cannot be comprehended from any single argument), we find that it involves more than the attack on the Christian interpretation, which regards human conduct as sinful, and more than the attack on the codification of ethics accepted by philosophers or on the moral conventions within society. The attack proceeds victoriously against *all* fixated and derived phenomena of generally accepted morality and points beyond to the source of morality itself in a universally valid *ought*. Only thus can we understand how Nietzsche is aware of the awesome implication of his position (because of him "the history of mankind is broken in two"): "The lightning flash of truth has struck precisely that which stood highest up to the present. He who understands what was thus annihilated can see whether or not he has anything at all to

cling to. . . . He who exposes morality thereby brings to light the worthlessness of all the values in which men believe or have believed." Nietzsche's critical questioning is extraordinary, but it is not the culmination of his thinking and experiencing: the questioning cannot be understood unless we sense the *genuine positive demands* that struggle within it for recognition. Nietzsche's reflections upon morality are far from being exhaustively expressed in a series of aggressive statements which formally refute each other. On the contrary, his formalism contains hints of a depth of intention whose existential significance we must bring into focus.

Nietzsche's *demands* cannot be of the sort that set up definite prescriptions and proscriptions which could guide the purposeful will. He starts much deeper because he wishes to reach the possible *Existenz* of man through indirect illumination of those *modes of existential actualization* which he envisages. This appeal of Nietzsche, which seems to express the very substance of his being, will be elucidated in four directions:

(1) *He champions the individual in opposition to the universal.* The morality which he opposes is founded upon a substance common to all men, upon the Deity, or upon reason. Nietzsche counters by saying: "My morality would consist of decreasing man's universality more and more and making him more specialized . . . and less understandable to others." As it is so essential to Nietzsche "that there is no single morality that alone can make us moral," he wishes to place the individual ahead of all moral and rational universals. But he does not intend to give the isolated individual as such free scope for his self-centered caprice. Rather he reaches into the depths of existential historical reality (*existentielle Geschichtlichkeit*) to make us aware of the law in the form in which it becomes audible in the concrete situation of *Existenz*. Thus by the word "individual" he means, not the isolated private person, but the single human being who always knows that "we are more than individuals; we are also the entire chain and charged with the tasks of all the futures of the chain." It may be said of this potentially existing single being that "each individual is an attempt to reach a species that is higher than man."

Still Nietzsche's statements abound in individualistic phrases which, when taken by themselves, lose their existential sense.

(2) *The innocence of becoming.* From his attacks on morality Nietzsche draws the following conclusion: If it is true

that insofar as we believe in morality we condemn life, then we must "annihilate morality in order to liberate life" and "attempt to be as amoral as nature." If man, when his powers are fullest and noblest, is part and parcel of nature, then the important thing is to *bring him back* to nature and the truths that she contains. Nietzsche speaks of this demand as his "assault against two millennia of perversion of nature and of desecration of man."

Still, if everything is nature and even morality is a product of a certain kind of nature, then all demands are nonsensical. When whatever exists and occurs must belong to nature, nothing may ever properly be commanded to rise above nature, and there is nothing that we can stigmatize as unnatural with a view to its rectification.

Nietzsche does in fact arrive at this last conclusion when he revokes every demand and *demands that all demanding cease*. Here he succeeds for the first time in regaining complete innocence and effecting a great liberation for all human behavior: "The opposition has been taken out of things; the homogeneity of all events is preserved." He no longer needs to exclude anything and is simply concerned to unite opposites. As a result of this liberation, he has no desire to annihilate even what he attacks. While the will to one single morality would amount to the tyranny of its adherents over all other types of men, Nietzsche concedes that he has "not declared war against the anaemic ideal of Christians with a view to annihilating it. . . . The continuation of the Christian ideal is one of the most desirable things there is. . . . We immoralists thus need the power of morality: our instinct of self-preservation demands that our opponent remain strong."

In this way Nietzsche gains insight into what he calls the "innocence of becoming" (*Unschuld des Werdens*)—an insight that conquers all other moralities with their dichotomy of good and bad or good and evil.

Wherever indignation and the urge to discover the guilty party predominate—wherever attempts are made to fix responsibilities—there "existence is robbed of its innocence." We need not blame others—neither God nor society nor parents and ancestors; we need not succumb to our instinct for revenge, to our urge to shift the blame for all our discomforts to a scapegoat, or to any other stultifying impulses. Rather we have the right to an absolutely affirmative view that embraces everything—even what we momentarily reject—within the total chain of events.

Whenever we blame ourselves, we are succumbing to the bigotry of moral narrowness. Nietzsche wishes to achieve a consciousness of innocence. Why does he take such pains to prove in every possible way the complete innocence of becoming? "Was it not simply in order to create for myself the feeling of complete irresponsibility—to place myself beyond every kind of praise and blame, to make myself independent of everything connected with yesterday and today—so that I could pursue my goal in my own way?" The seal of the attainment of freedom is "being no longer ashamed of one's self." When knowledge of the innocence of becoming is gained, then for the first time the highest possibilities present themselves: "It is the innocence of becoming alone that gives us the greatest courage and the greatest freedom."

Nevertheless, when Nietzsche attempts to reconcile all opposites, to see nature merely *as* nature and all things as natural, and to acquire the innocence of becoming, he cannot but discover that nothing follows from mere contemplation: no demand, to be sure, but also no impulse. Thus he returns to the thesis: "No impulse can be derived from nature as known." A "beyond good and evil," maintained merely as such, would in fact be just as empty a beyond as any known to metaphysics. Man must will something, move toward its realization, and receive guidance from its direction. This direction is not provided by becoming *per se*; it is always contained *within* becoming in the form of a real act through which one shows what he is and what he wills and through which he immediately becomes again subject to demands in the face of opposites and able either to hearken to the law or to turn a deaf ear to it.

Nietzsche's philosophizing is not intended to allow thinking man to sink peacefully into the undisturbed innocence of becoming. On the contrary, he should be able, by listening to the source of the possible, to learn what is historically called for by his own specific situation. Insofar as Nietzsche's thinking is intended to lead us through these self-destructive antitheses into the clarity of the audible, where the concrete and determinate law gives way before the encompassing law that becomes known only historically, this thinking must itself lose all definiteness. Hence Nietzsche is not content with such final statements as "the innocence of becoming has been restored," or "all is necessity—all is innocence"; rather he wishes to hit upon the productive factor in this extreme freedom. He calls it "creation."

(3) *Creation (Schaffen)*. Creation is the highest demand; it is authentic being, the ground of all essential activity:

Creation is *evaluation*: "Without evaluation the nut of existence would be hollow!" "Change of values—that is change of the creators." "As yet no one knows what is good and bad—except the creator!—He is the one who creates the goal for mankind and gives the earth its meaning and its future: the one whose *creativity* makes it possible for something to be good or bad."

Creation is *faith (Glaube)*. The sterile lack faith. "But he who was driven to create always had his prophetic dreams and astrological portents—and had faith in faith!"

Creation is *love*: "All great love . . . still wishes to create—the object of its love!"

In creation is *annihilation*: "It is only as creators that we can annihilate." All creators are hard. "To my love I sacrifice myself, and my fellow-men as well—this is the language of all creators." The will to create is the will to become, to grow, and to shape, . . . but destruction too is involved in creation." Together with the *creative good*, which is *the highest good of all*, "goes the greatest evil."

"All creation is *communication (Mitteilen)*." The moments of greatest creation are those of increased capacity for communication and understanding. "Creation: that means to give of ourselves, leaving ourselves emptier, poorer, and more loving."

Still, all aspects of creation together form a *unity*: "The knower, the creator, and the lover are one." The unity is "the great synthesis of the knower, lover, and annihilator" or, again, it is called "the unity, in power, of the creator, the lover, and the knower."

The *condition* of creation is great pain and lack of knowledge. "Creation—that is the great deliverance from suffering. . . . But if the creator is to exist, suffering itself is needed." "To see right through the perishable net and the last veil—that would be the greatest tedium and the end of all creators."

In creation *authentic being is attained*. "Freedom appears only in creation." "Our only happiness consists in creating." "As a creator you transcend yourself—you cease to be your own contemporary."

The high value of the creator is *unconditional* for Nietzsche: "Even the most trivial creative act is better than talking about what has been created." "Our salvation does not lie in

knowing but in creating." "You should learn only for the sake of creating": "One even *ought* not to know more of a thing than what one can create. Furthermore the only way to *know* a thing truly is to attempt to make it."

But it is as though the creator were *invisible*: "The people have little conception of the great, that is, the creator. But they have an appreciation for all agitators and imitators of great things."

Just what creation is remains *necessarily* indefinite. It is one of those *signa* of Nietzsche's philosophizing that, like "life," "will to power," and "eternal recurrence," is never conceptualized. Our thinking runs aground on them, either negatively, through becoming lost in a void or through misunderstanding due to simplification, or positively, by being translated into an actual impulse. In every kind of philosophizing we find these ultimate inconceivables that are aptly expressed but never conquered by words. Nietzsche always treats creation as though it were self-evident, but virtually never takes it directly as his theme. He does not develop and explain its nature. It is never a possible goal of the will. But his formulations have all the power of an as yet indefinite appeal to recall and to come to grips with authentic being.

Creation is absolutely primordial, but it is not a first beginning, as though nothing had ever been before. If, after the annihilation of morality, creation is the new morality, then it is precisely the creator who does *the preserving within the annihilation*. Consequently Nietzsche maintains throughout his thinking the position that he in no way intends to destroy morality by denying it.

Nietzsche is not simply hesitant: we must "guard against rushing violently head over heels to exchange our customary morality for a new evaluation of things." Rather he explicitly demands the preservation of traditional morality: "We will be the inheritors of morality when we have destroyed the moral." We possess "the moral sense as a great legacy of previous generations." "We should not underestimate what a couple of millennia of morality have bred into our spirit!" Precisely in the case of the creative path-finder, "a kind of wealth in moral inheritance must be presupposed." "We wish to be the heirs of all previous morality and *not* to begin anew. All our actions are simply morality reacting against its previous form."

In the end Nietzsche bases the possibility of creativity of the heirs themselves on *the struggle against the pressure*

which Christianity has exerted for thousands of years: through this struggle the thorough-going Christian morality has "created in Europe a splendid spiritual tension. . . . With so tense a bow one can now shoot to the most distant goals." Twice the attempt has been made on a grand scale "to relax the bow: once by the Jesuit Movement and again by the democratic enlightenment." But Nietzsche, sure of still having the full tension of his own bow, wishes to preserve and increase the tension in the world as the source of a creation that will far outstrip all previous creation. What, in the critique of morality, is creatively destructive, must after all—since this is not the end of all things—assert itself in a new way as creative morality.

For *himself*, Nietzsche is aware that he lives on "a rich moral heritage" and that he is in a position to treat morality as an illusion just because to him it "has become instinctive and unavoidable" (to Fuchs, July 29, '88). To be sure, the morality that governs him and that enables him to reject morality, does not derive from a timeless conscience but from a positive attitude that is at once original with him and historically inherited. As an immoralist he feels himself to be "still related to the age-old German integrity and piety." Being what he is, he would not be able to apply the conclusions that could conceivably be drawn from his own doctrine: "It is all very well to talk about all kinds of immorality; but to live by them is another matter! For example, I could not bear to break my word or even to commit murder. It would be my lot to pine away for a shorter or longer time and then perish!"

(4) *Man as his own creator.* Nietzsche views man as more than a being that passively undergoes alterations: he never doubts that man is free and that he develops himself. His criticism of morality is intent upon making precisely this genuine freedom again possible. But man's freedom has its own specific meaning: the freedom of self-realization is simply creation. How man the creator is also the self-developer has been formulated by Nietzsche in three different ways:

(a) Since man is a creative being, in that he *appreciates, measures, and evaluates*, there are no absolute values that simply subsist as realities needing only to be discovered. Rather values are the form in which man, in a unique moment of historical actuality, lays hold not only upon the conditions of his existence but even those of his own self-being. Values are never final; at any given time they must be created. That is why Nietzsche, in the present moment of world

history, assumes the task of a "transvaluation of all values."

(b) Change, furthermore, comes about in connection with the fundamental relation that man assumes toward himself by seeing himself, evaluating himself, being deceived about himself, and giving form to himself. In this occurs, in addition to what is open to psychological investigation, something that is forever psychologically unobservable, although for self-being it constitutes the genuine assurance of its actuality: what I myself really am comes to me from without as though I were given as a present to myself. Hence Nietzsche tells us that behind every psychologically analyzable effect that man can have upon himself lies the incomprehensible riddle of a genuine depth which makes possible self-organization without repression and self-mastery without self-violation. As fundamental impulses emerge, I am carried, beyond all mere psychological actuality, to that from which the latter first acquires its meaning and its form. It is not a question here of grasping a psychologically discoverable measure and a mean between extremes, for what Nietzsche means by these words transcends the psychological. But self-being is far better attuned to it than to anything psychologically knowable: "It is best never to speak of *two very great things: measure and mean*. Very few people know the powers and omens that come to them from *the mysterious paths and inner experiences* and conversions. They revere them as something divine and avoid noisy proclamations."

(c) Finally the change derived from the evaluative impulses within the medium of reflexive behavior can only be realized through a capacity for *motion within one's own nature* that does not exist as an entity, but has its being in the process of becoming through which it realizes itself. This is what Nietzsche regards as the phenomenon of the procreation of that which I already am in the sense of existential possibility, a phenomenon that transcends all psychologically visible conversions and all biologically knowable processes. Man as creator changes with the new evaluations that he assumes and at the same time becomes that which he really is. Thus Nietzsche makes Pindar's demand his own: *Become what you are!*

Nietzsche's stern earnestness paralyzes every sort of moral pathos. His kind of thinking can not rest content with, or even find edification in, any proposition, demand, law, or specific content. It proceeds indirectly by demanding that one take seriously those profound inner depths that would simply be ob-

structed by appeal to any derived law and any fixed standard.

When one gives up the moral universal that makes its demands with logically inflexible unconditionality, no return is possible. One is threatened by the possibility of sinking into a limitless void. The loss of the resistance afforded by immutable moral laws may as easily be followed by abandonment to caprice and accident as by emergence from the source of an authentic and historically unique possibility.

In the end, the contradictory elements and circles in the movements of Nietzsche's thought are simply the means to touch indirectly upon what lies beyond form, law, and the expressible. Nothing can be at this boundary, and yet everything must be there. This thinking must always end with allusions to a ground from which my being will come toward me: allusions like "the mysterious paths of inner conversions," the "belief in ourselves," "creation," the actuality of life as the lightness of the "dance." But all formulae remain ambiguous and self-discrepant when they are involved with belief in a being whose becoming does not derive from what it is. In connection with what we ourselves basically are, this amounts to saying: "Belief in ourselves is the strongest bond, the most compelling whiplash—and the strongest wing."

Creation as Freedom without Transcendence. We must now examine in greater detail Nietzsche's idea that creation takes the place of freedom, or, in other words, *is* freedom. In the sense employed by the philosophy of *Existenz*,¹ freedom, whether Christian or Kantian, exists in relation to transcendence. Freedom is the potentiality of a finite being; it is limited by transcendence, and it depends on an incomprehensible source lying at this limit (whether this be called "grace" or "being-given-to-oneseft"). The decision as to what has eternal significance is made through freedom. That is, freedom exists historically as the union of the temporal and the eternal and as the decision that is itself merely an appearance of eternal being.

Nietzsche rejects this freedom. He professes to follow Spinoza because the latter denies the freedom of the will, the moral order in the world, and genuine evil (to Overbeck, July 30, '80). The freedom that Nietzsche acknowledges and asserts amounts to being rooted in one's self and having the

¹Jaspers uses the term *Existenzphilosophie* to characterize his own view (*Philosophie*, III, p. 217; *Von der Wahrheit*, p. 165), while he prefers to use the word *Existentialismus* to signify a view which he rejects (*Philosophie*, I, xxiii).—Translators

source of life within one's self without transcendence. Such freedom is both *negative* and *positive*. The way of freedom is *negative* insofar as it discards, breaks through, and denies what has been real and binding: "To cut oneself off from his past (from fatherland, belief, parents, companions), to associate with *outcasts* (in history and in society); to topple what is most revered and affirm what is most strongly forbidden. . . ." On the *positive* side, the fruits of freedom are of the nature of "creation." The positive cannot occur without the negative, because it can be attained only by traversing the negative way. The dialectic of the first discourse of Zarathustra shows that this way leads from service through the rejection of service to creation. But were the negative to detach itself from the positive and remain negative merely, it would amount to an empty and therefore spurious freedom. All negation is justified only by the creative positing to which it is preparatory and which it conditions or follows. By itself it is inferior to obedient service in accordance with tradition. That is why Zarathustra asks of all liberators who wish to remove man's chains for the sake of freedom as such: "Free for what?" He is indifferent to "freedom from" and expresses the opinion that "there are many who discarded their last vestige of worth in throwing off their servitude."

Since *negative* freedom is entirely inadequate, it is of paramount importance that negation should be carried out from the standpoint of *positive*, creative freedom. If positive creating were not the genuine ground of the annulment of existing obligations (and it is here the existential rather than the argumentative ground that is in question), then one could well exclaim in fear: "Your wild dogs clamor to be set free." By the same token, mere restraint of one's own unbridled impulses is not enough, when this springs from the inane denial of anything having instinctive existence and not from the sense of positive creative substance: "You have conquered yourself. But why do you behave solely as the vanquished? I want to behold the victorious one. . . ." This latter is the creator.

Thus Nietzsche's freedom without transcendence is by no means intent upon simply returning to mere life; it aspires to the life of authentic creation. Just as Nietzsche's denial of morals does not mean the annulment of all morality but a laying hold upon what is *more than merely moral*, so here his sole intention is to stimulate man to higher achievement. To be sure, without God, Nietzsche's purpose seems to lead

to the radical loss of all bonds: what remains is just to live as before and to allow life to continue as always. But this is to turn Nietzsche's idea into its very opposite. Its challenge is tremendous, for the entire burden is laid upon the individual. He requires each of us to follow the insecure and thus dangerous new path of the individual who is not yet sustained within a stratified society and who must find the source of his ties within himself. Nietzsche is asking those who abandon morality to bind themselves by still higher and more inexorable bonds. After all, morality is no longer real; it is only an empty and deceptive show. Threateningly, he exclaims: "If you are too weak to give laws to yourselves, then let a tyrant lay his yoke upon you and say: 'Obey! Gnash and obey!' and all good and evil will be drowned in obedience to him."

One can find decisive evidence for this interpretation of his doctrine. In a moment that led to his later, lonely, existence, he found it unbearable that his "immoralism" could be confused with the "less than moral" by a person whom he had believed to share his conception of a philosophy that lives through creation at a level above morality. "You have within you," he wrote, "that impulse to a sacred selfishness which is the impulse to obey the highest commandment. You must at first have confused it, under the spell of some curse, with its opposite: the selfishness and delight in plunder of a cat that *desires nothing beyond being alive. . . .*" But the meaning of this mere life is simply "feeling for life in a void; . . . something I find extremely repugnant in man" (correspondence with Lou, Nov. 1, '82). Nietzsche expresses the contrast even more tersely: "She told me herself that she had no morals--and I supposed that hers, like mine, were stricter than anyone's" (correspondence with Rée, '82). This high claim that no one can fully live up to does not exist, to be sure, as a definable duty, and it cannot be fulfilled by acting in accordance with a specific law. Still the expression of this new morality clearly intends the very opposite of mere amoral living.

To be sure, Nietzsche characterizes the new, higher, and still wholly indeterminate morality as "that of the creating ones," but he does not express it in terms of any definite contents. The creative transvaluation of all values must bring forth his new "morality:" "Who will create the *goal* that stands high over all humanity as well as over the individual?" The path can no longer be that of previous morality which intended merely to "preserve." Now that there is no goal for

all, "an *experimental* morality is called for: *setting* one's self a goal." What is meant is "a substitute for morality through the will to our goal and consequently to the means to this goal." It is the substance of the future that is to become free: "They will call you the destroyers of morality, but you are really only the finders of yourselves." Everyone is made to rely on himself. A new self-sufficiency must develop: "We must free ourselves of morality in order to be able to live morally," or again: "I had to invalidate morality in order to realize my moral will."

When Nietzsche makes his magnificent claim on a deeper unattained source, he believes that *it can be reached only without God*. "To rule and no longer be God's vassal—this is the means left to us for ennobling man."

Because Nietzsche wishes to define, circumscribe, and interpret the creative source apart from transcendence, it constantly comes about that, in spite of his will to something more-than-life, he suddenly finds in his hands mere nature in the sense of what is biologically knowable, or he is left with only the corresponding mere psychological or sociological actualities. The new morality is to be a "natural" morality, and this is affirmed in spite of all the thoughts that should render it untenable when he says: "Every naturalism in morality, that is, every *sound* morality, is governed by an instinct for life."

For example, the demand, "*Become what you are!*" illustrates the way in which Nietzsche's formulations lead him involuntarily from the *appeal to an existential source* to the mere assertion of *natural facts* (and hence of particular investigable existents within the world). In seeming correspondence with the above exhortation, Nietzsche, by ascertaining the nature of this developing being instead of demanding a certain nature of him, is able to say: "One becomes a decent man just because he *is* a decent man, i.e., because he is born with a capital of good instincts and favorable conditions. . . . Today we know better than to regard moral degeneracy as something separate from the physiological." Now it is certainly impossible at the level of existence to separate the physiological or causal (to say nothing of the psychological and sociological) from *Existenz*: whatever we come to know about ourselves through scientific investigation is so intimately **bound** up with us that we could not exist without it. But, **inseparable** from this observable existence that we know ourselves to be, there is also something else: the source

of man himself, which transcends science. Only the clarity of conceptual distinction removes the ambiguity of a being that allows existential possibility and physiologically and psychologically investigable actuality to appear as identical rather than merely as involved with each other: (1) The being that I "ought" to become may simply have the significance of *just-being-that-way* (with the consequence of withholding oneself on the basis of the principle that is really born of despair: I just happen to be that way); *ought* then no longer has any real meaning but is an inexorable *must*. Or (2) the being that I ought to become means as well the *encompassing force of possibility* (*das Umgreifende der Möglichkeit*) which I can never know as something fixed and determinate and which no one else can know. This possibility remains open and reveals again and again what I am (while self-withholding only leads to ever-recurring confirmation of the same inferiority or imagined excellence). On the plane of psychological facts, Nietzsche himself denies "unchangeability of character" and condemns the "average man's belief in himself as in a fully developed and completed state of affairs." Psychologically, "we are free" to choose among possibilities. But this source from which it is decided "what we are free" to do—this being that cannot be identified by objective procedures of characterology but which we ourselves most truly are—is that to which the demand "Become what you are!" is directed. This demand, which would be meaningless if it referred merely to an innate just-being-so as a psychological state of affairs, becomes "dangerous" when taken seriously because it is directed at the still indeterminate source of my being and is exposed to all kinds of misunderstanding. For it is not a definite law and an objectively derivable obligation that decides, but rather reliance on the "creative" source in me, and this may be lacking. Hence when Nietzsche says, "Become what you are: that is a challenge which is permissible in the case of only a few men but is superfluous in the case of only the very fewest of those few," even this challenge may become meaningless when one reverts to the view that man has an objectively identifiable nature. But the meaning of that true and willed existential danger that creativity may never come forth—a danger present to Nietzsche's consciousness with extraordinary urgency and persistence—is audibly conveyed.

Immanence Reverses Itself. Whenever anyone has been sure of possessing the kind of freedom that Nietzsche de-

nies, he has viewed it as inseparable from himself, and, in being thus free, he has experienced both nullification and security in confronting transcendence. But creation, which Nietzsche substitutes for existential freedom as the sole immanent actualization of his kind of freedom, ends within itself or is lost, since it has only itself to depend on. The creating individual, whether he runs into obstacles or is able to continue on his way, has, according to Nietzsche's philosophy, an awareness of destiny rather than a relation to transcendence. In the place of transcendence Nietzsche puts "necessity," metaphysically so conceived that every accident that happens to me and every impulse that stirs within me appears as meaningful in relation to the totality of my development as a *creator*. Necessity, thus conceived, is not wholly unlike the freedom which he denies, though it differs essentially from the causally interpreted necessity of a psychical and biological order of occurrences. In spite of everything, the one affords Nietzsche a transcending consciousness of being within the whole, while the other offers merely a relative knowledge of particular relations within the world.

Creation without transcendence, or self-being without God, must lead to two conclusions that Nietzsche actually draws. When human finiteness ceases to be evident *as* finiteness because it is no longer enclosed by any infinity, i.e., when creative freedom faces nothingness instead of transcendence (for that which has nothing outside of itself is everything, with the result that its finiteness cannot be taken seriously), then either (1) creation is *absolutized as a temporal actuality* to which no valid standard applies, or (2) it is *deified*. Naturalizations express the first conclusion, hybris the second. Neither of these relates to transcendence; each is, instead, a way in which confidence becomes evident at the boundary which is no longer a boundary but a fulfillment. Nietzsche has expressed both consequences in a singularly daring language in which all logical thinking reverses itself:

(1) In assuming a position outside of morality, Nietzsche believed that he was *in agreement with Jesus*. "Jesus took sides against those who judge: he wished to be the destroyer of morality." "Jesus said: . . . Of what concern is morality to us who are sons of God!" Nietzsche saw in Jesus the anticipated realization of his own idea (blurred in the process of deification) of what is more than morality and, hence, what he himself desired to be: "God, conceived as the state of being liberated from morality, compressing within Himself all

the fullness of life's contrasts, redeeming and justifying them in divine agony: God as beyond . . . good and evil." It is in accord with the nature of this conclusion that Nietzsche in the early stages of insanity signed himself "The Crucified" as well as Dionysus.

(2) Essentially the same self-confidence in transgressing all determinate morality appears as if reversed in its nature when aimed not at the source (there being nothing but nature and actuality) but *at triumphant effectiveness* within the world: "We immoralists are today the strongest power: the other great powers need us. We construe the world in our own image." Whatever has the appearance of validity seems to have gone by the boards when there is nothing left but mere brutal actuality in its immediacy, in which such self-confidence seeks nothing but victory for itself. Then one begins to wonder whether we are left, not with the more-than-moral, but rather with the less-than-moral—the mere existence of the forces of nature. This self-confidence does indeed become inseparable from demonic triumph in these awesome statements: "We immoralists are today the only power that needs no allies in order to attain victory. . . . We do not even need the lie. . . . Even without the truth we would come to power. . . . The magic that fights for us is that of the extreme."

Neither of the above expresses any longer the ethos of finite beings that go their way in tension with transcendence and bound by historical reality. Because these last demands of Nietzsche leave no room for the spirit who feels himself bound because of his knowledge of finiteness, both deification and sinking into the extremes (as an overpowering efficacy) are possible. Where finitude, confinement of the finite, and possible *Existenz* appear eliminated in this manner, finite creatures like ourselves are shut out. It is as though freedom in Nietzsche's thinking becomes transformed into creation, which, in its ambiguous indeterminacy, offers us no solid ground to stand on, while creation in turn is consumed in an explosion which leaves only a phantom deity or nothingness behind.

Finally it is always like a return from deification and deviliation to find determinacy and concrete range of application in Nietzsche's thinking. Then, in opposition to deification and the immoderation of the extreme, he seems always prepared to come back to his acceptance of the statement: it is essential for manliness "that we do not deceive ourselves

about our *human* position: rather let us proceed strictly according to *our measure*." But man must find his own limitation in the world by following *a way of life*. In seeking to find a way, Nietzsche accomplishes man's task of setting limits to himself.

To be sure there are times when he finds this way hopeless. His situation, which does not permit him either to live with morality or to live without it, he characterizes as follows: "Perhaps a devil invented morality in order to torture men through pride, and a second devil at some time took it away from them to make them suffer from self-contempt." The impossibility of escape from this makes it seem that "perhaps man must simply perish as a result of his morality."

But actually the way remains open to Nietzsche: "We who again dare to live in an *amoralized* world—we pagans— . . . realize what heathen belief is: to have to conceive of beings higher than man." Nietzsche believes that these beings that transcend humanity *can only be expected to emerge from the man* who transforms himself within the world. In place of the deity and of all morality, it is the *image of man* that becomes significant in propelling us upward.

NIETZSCHE: THE REVALUATION OF VALUES

BY PHILIPPA FOOT

This problem of the *value* of pity and of the morality of pity . . . seems at first sight to be merely something detached, an isolated question mark; but whoever sticks with it and *learns* how to ask questions here will experience what I experienced—a tremendous new prospect opens up for him, a new possibility comes over him like a vertigo, every kind of mistrust, suspicion, fear leaps up, his belief in morality, in all morality, falters—finally a new demand becomes audible . . . we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values themselves must just be called in question* . . . (GM Preface 6).¹

What Nietzsche expresses here, his sense of the fearful strangeness of his thoughts, is something intensely felt and not unfitting given the facts of the case. For in his lonely, highly daring mental voyage he had come to a view of life which was quite unlike that of any of his contemporaries, and which brought him to challenge ways of thought and behaviour centuries old. He was ready, he said, to call in question Christian morality and even all morality, and when he had questioned he condemned. Yet Nietzsche saw as clearly as anyone that morality could fascinate and inspire. "Thou shalt" he said is the name of a great dragon "sparkling like gold" (Z I "On the Three Metamorphoses" 10). He knew that what he was doing was almost unthinkable; he was branding as evil what seemed most certainly good.

Now one would expect that such a challenge from an undoubted genius must either be defeated or else shake the world. But neither of these things have happened. It is true that Nietzsche's theories (or a travesty of them) played a brief and inglorious part on the world's stage when he was proclaimed as a prophet by the Nazis, but by and large he has neither been accepted nor refuted, and this seems a remarkable fact. How is it, one may ask, that philosophers today do not even try to refute Nietzsche, and seem to feel morality as firm as ever under their feet? Why do we not argue with him as we argue with other philosophers of the past? Part of the

This essay was written especially for this volume.

¹ Translations, unless otherwise stated, by Walter Kaufmann.

answer seems to be that a confrontation with Nietzsche is a difficult thing to arrange. We find it hard to know where we could meet him because of the intrinsically puzzling nature of a project such as his. Nietzsche had demanded a critique of moral values and announced that he was calling in question "the value of these values themselves". But how can one value values? The idea of such a thing is enough to make one's head spin. It is, therefore, with a rueful sense of the difficulties that I shall try, in this essay, to confront Nietzsche, or at least to help to prepare the ground for a confrontation.

A problem arises at the outset. In the passage I quoted he spoke of the morality of pity but also of "all morality". Which shall we take his target to be? I shall consider first Nietzsche's special objection to Christian morality, with its teaching of the virtues of humility and compassion, and its rejection of "the world".

Nietzsche wanted to show Christian morality as a "slave morality" rooted not in anything fine or admirable but rather in weakness, fear, and malice; these were its origins and to these origins its present nature conformed. In this morality the good man is the humble and compassionate man, the one who is not to be feared. But originally, he insists, it was quite otherwise. In the beginning it was the strong, noble, privileged aristocrat who called himself good, and called those who lacked his own qualities bad. These old concepts were turned on their heads when the perspective of the weak prevailed. For then the contrast of what was good and bad (*schlecht*) gave way to the contrast between what was good and evil (*böse*); the weak branded those they feared evil, and praised the "propitiatory" qualities natural to men like themselves who were incapable of aggression. Where the old valuation had been positive the new was negative; the "members of the herd" must first brand the enemies they feared as evil before they could see themselves as good. Moreover Nietzsche detects a large amount of malice under the professions of Christian humility and goodwill. When the weak call the strong evil the move is not merely defensive; it is also an expression of that peculiar malice which Nietzsche referred to as *ressentiment*. Those who cultivate humility and the other propitiatory virtues to cloak their weakness nourish an envious resentment against those stronger than themselves. They want revenge for their inferiority and have a deep desire to humiliate and harm. The wish to punish seems to Nietzsche one of the most evident signs of this hidden malice, and he

sees the idea of free will, and accountability, as invented by those who desired to inflict punishment. Nor is punishment always directed outward; the man of self-sacrificing virtue is resentful and venomous also towards himself. "But thus I counsel you, my friends: Mistrust all in whom the impulse to punish is powerful" (Z II "On the Tarantulas").

The man professing Christian virtues is, Nietzsche insists, a sick individual, deeply malicious to himself and others. He has been taught to reject life as it is, to despise his own sensuality, and to torment himself and others in the name of his ideals. Even these ideals are inimical to health, since what is preached is compassion, and this Nietzsche sees as a kind of sickness in itself. Pity, he says, is a *temptation* to be resisted at all costs; he thinks of it as a kind of poison to the compassionate man, who becomes infected by the sufferings of others. "The suffering of others infects us, pity is an infection" (WP 368).² Nor does he believe that pity relieves suffering. Now and then it may do so, but more often the object of our compassion suffers from our intervention in his affairs. He suffers first from the fact that we are helping him. "Having seen the sufferer suffer, I was ashamed for the sake of his shame; and when I helped him I transgressed grievously against his pride" (Z II "On the Pitying"). "It seems to me that a human being with the very best of intentions can do immeasurable harm, if he is immodest enough to wish to profit those whose spirit and will are concealed from him . . ." wrote Nietzsche in a letter to his sister in 1885 (quoted in Walter Kaufmann [ed.], *The Portable Nietzsche*, New York, Viking, 1956 p. 441). Nor did Nietzsche think that good motives lay behind most charitable acts. Charitable and helpful people "dispose of the needy as of possessions. . . . One finds them jealous if one crosses or anticipates them when they want to help" (BGE 194). Concern for others often betrayed a man's dissatisfaction with himself; men who were dull tried to cheer themselves up with the sight of their neighbour's misfortunes, while those who had a low opinion of themselves would try to buy back a better opinion from those on whom they had conferred a benefit. Nietzsche saw the preoccupation with others as an evasion, and a sign of spiritual ill-health; what is important is to love oneself "so that one can bear to be with oneself and need not roam" (Z III "On the Spirit of Gravity" 2). The man who loves him-

² Translation by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale.

self will be the one who most truly benefits others; in his own rejoicing he will forget how to contrive pain for them.

What shall we say of Nietzsche's attack on Christian morality as it has so far been described? With what weapons is he attacking, or on what ground? Several different lines of attack can be discerned. In the first place he is suggesting that what is praised as Christian virtue is largely a sham, and that true goodwill would be produced not by teaching the morality of compassion but rather by encouraging "a healthy egoism". Secondly he is saying that judged by its own aims this morality is bad. Men suffer pity as a sickness, and by their pity they do more harm than good. Each of these charges would be damaging if it could be shown to be supported by the facts. But what of Nietzsche's account of the origins of Christian morality, and his insistence that it represents the ascendancy of the weak over the strong? If proved would this be damaging or not? Could one reply that virtues such as compassion and justice are indeed of special interest to those liable to misfortune and vulnerable to oppression, and that they are none the worse for that? Such a reply would miss the point of Nietzsche's attack. He is trying to show the "good and virtuous" as representatives of a mean and base section of mankind, as fawning, timid, incapable people who express in hidden form the malice they are afraid to express openly. He wants to suggest that they are both despicable and dislikable, and if he could really do this he would have struck a most telling blow. For how could a society which came to see things in Nietzsche's fashion have a morality of this kind? It is not, after all, enough for a moral system that particular actions should be rewarded or punished as in a system of laws. If a certain man is to be seen as a good man, and certain actions as good actions, then he and they must be generally esteemed. And no one is esteemed if he is the object of scorn and dislike. If Nietzsche could show that we have no reason either to admire the man of Christian virtue or to be grateful to him, he would have knocked away a psychological base without which this morality cannot stand.

In representing Christian morality as the weapon used by the weak to defend and exalt themselves Nietzsche was trying to show it and them in a disagreeable light. But it was much more important to him to show that in favouring the weak at the expense of the strong Christianity was the most powerful of the forces making for the degeneration of the

human race. "Nothing has preoccupied me more profoundly than the problem of decadence" he wrote (CW Preface). And he saw as decadent the type of man encouraged by Christian teaching, describing him as an accommodating, industrious, gregarious individual who was mediocre, and dull. Against this portrait he set that of a stronger "higher" type of individual, bold, independent, and ready to say "yes" to life. Such a man would not be much concerned about suffering, whether his own or that of others. Among his equals he would behave with restraint; to the weak he might be dangerous, but if he harmed them it would be rather from disregard than from malice. The weak man, however, is afraid of suffering for himself and preoccupied with the misfortunes of others. He tries to build himself a safe life which shall not require too much exertion. "One has one's little pleasure for the day and one's little pleasure for the night: but one has a regard for health" (Z I "Zarathustra's Prologue" 5). He preaches the morality of compassion, though filled with secret ill will towards others.

Much controversy has surrounded Nietzsche's writings on the "higher" and "lower" types of man. Is he to be taken as glorifying the cruel tyrant, the "beast of prey", or did he have some less repulsive ideal? The answer seems to be neither an unqualified yes nor an unqualified no. There is no doubt that in the comparison of men he preferred as the more healthy type "even Caesare Borgia" to the mediocre submissive modern man. And there are some embarrassingly awful passages in which he speaks of the superior man's ruthlessness towards his inferiors as if it could be seen as something merely pranksome. But the cruel man is certainly not his ideal, and there are some to whom he refuses to preach egoism at all.

There are the terrible ones who carry around within themselves the beast of prey and have no choice but lust or self-laceration. And even their lust is still self-laceration. They have not even become human beings yet, these terrible ones: let them preach renunciation of life and pass away themselves! (Z I "On the Preachers of Death").

In Nietzsche's eyes the important distinction was that of the "ascending" and "descending" types of men. One great question was to be asked about the history of any race: did it represent decline or ascent? And each individual should be scrutinized "to see whether he represents the ascending or the descending line of life" (Twilight "Skirmishes of an Un-

timely Man" 33). Nietzsche saw himself as the one, the only one, who saw clearly the contrast between ascending and declining mankind. "I have a subtler sense of smell for the signs of ascent and decline than any other human being before me; I am the teacher *par excellence* for this . . ." (EH "Why I Am So Wise" 1). It was in this context that he preached egoism to the strong:

Every individual consists of the whole course of evolution. . . . If he represents the ascending course of mankind, then his value is in fact extraordinary; and extreme care may be taken over the preservation and promotion of his development. (It is concern for the future promised him that gives the well-constituted individual such an extraordinary right to egoism.) If he represents the descending course, decay, chronic sickening, then he has little value: and the first demand of fairness is for him to take as little space, force, and sunshine as possible away from the well-constituted (WP 373).

And it was in this context that Nietzsche spoke least ambiguously about the fate he envisaged for the weak. "The weak and the failures shall perish: first principle of *our* love of man" (A 2).

It was no wonder then that Nietzsche had a special hatred of Christianity. He saw it as the religion of the weak designed for their protection and glorification, and he saw it as the most powerful influence for decadence and decline. Above all he thought Christian morality harmful to the stronger and healthier type of man. By preserving the incapable and "misbegotten", and by insisting that they be the object of compassionate attention, it would cause even the strong to be infected with gloom and nihilism. And even more importantly it would lead the "higher" type of man to mistrust his own nature, and would create conditions in which it was impossible for him to find his health. To require a peaceable benevolence from such a man, to preach humility and pity to him, is necessarily to injure him.

To demand of strength that it should *not* express itself as strength, that it should *not* be a desire to overcome, a desire to throw down, a desire to become master, a thirst for enemies and resistances and triumphs, is just as absurd as to demand of weakness that it should express itself as strength (GM I 13).

The strong man condemned by society for doing what his nature demands will suffer from guilt and self-hatred, and may well be turned into a criminal.

The criminal type is the type of the strong human being under unfavourable circumstances: a strong human being made sick. . . . His *virtues* are ostracized by society; the most vivid drives with which he is endowed soon grow together with the depressing affects—with suspicion, fear and dishonour (Twilight "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man" 45).

Nietzsche does not shrink from the conclusion that for some men ruthlessness may be the condition of health. It is the counterpart of his belief that "everything evil, terrible, tyrannical in man, everything in him that is kin to beasts of prey and serpents, serves the enhancement of the species "man" as much as its opposite does" (BGE 44). If God is dead nothing guarantees that evil may not be the condition of good.

If . . . a person should regard even the affects of hatred, envy, covetousness, and the lust to rule as conditions of life, as factors which, fundamentally and essentially, must be present in the general economy of life (and must, therefore, be further enhanced if life is to be further enhanced)—he will suffer from such a view of things as from seasickness. And yet even this hypothesis is far from being the strangest and most painful in this immense and almost new domain of dangerous insights . . . (BGE 23).

It is, then, for the sake of the "higher" man that the values of Christian morality must be abandoned, and it is from this perspective that the revaluation of values takes place. Is it Nietzsche's intention to present us with a clash of interests—the good of the strong against that of the weak? Obviously he has this intention, but just as obviously this is not all that he wants to suggest. A more puzzling aspect of his doctrines comes before us when we remind ourselves of what he says about the *value* of the "higher" type of man.

The problem I pose is . . . what type of men shall be *bred*, shall be *willed*, for being higher in value, worthier of life, more certain of a future (A 3).

And again Nietzsche says:

We have a different faith; to us the democratic movement is . . . a form of the decay, namely the diminution, of man, making him mediocre and *lowering his value* (BGE 203, italics added).

What does he mean when he speaks of the *value* of one type of man as greater than that of another? Nietzsche himself has remarked elsewhere that one can never too carefully con-

sider the question "value for what?" And in these terms one might try to explain what he says about the value of certain men. Perhaps he means that the contribution they make to life in general—by their optimism and fearlessness for instance—makes them *valuable* to us all. Or perhaps he is judging their value by the contribution they make to the future. Are they not a bridge to the superior man who may come in the future—to the *Übermensch*? Neither suggestion tells the whole story, and the second simply shifts the problem. If the "Overman" or "Superman" is the one who gives some men value, this must be because he has value himself. In fact Nietzsche seems to want to say that anyone who is strong, independent, and so on—anyone who fits his description of the higher type of man—is one who *has value* in himself, and we are left with this puzzling idea. Is Nietzsche merely talking nonsense, or can we make sense of the word "value" as it is used here? The answer seems to be that we can. For it does make sense to say that *we value* strong and exceptional individuals, whether or not Nietzsche's picture of these individuals rings true. We do find patterns of reaction to exceptional men that would allow us to see here a valuing rather similar to valuing on aesthetic grounds, even if it is one for which we have no special name. I am thinking of the interest and admiration which is the common attitude to remarkable men of exceptional independence of mind and strength of will. Such men hold our attention, and are often willingly served. When Nietzsche says that what is at stake is whether "the *highest power and splendor* actually possible to the type man" is ever to be attained (GM Preface 6) it suggests that he is appealing to our tendency to *admire* certain individuals whom we see as powerful and splendid. He himself even says, in one passage, that "This is at bottom a question of taste and of aesthetics: would it be desirable that the 'most respectable', i.e., most tedious, species of man should survive?" (WP 353). But I think that the passage is untypical, and in any case does not quite describe the facts as they are; if there is an element of respect in the common reaction to strong and remarkable men then the analogy with an aesthetic valuation should not be pressed too far. Perhaps what we should do is simply to suggest a similarity between the way we attribute *value* (aesthetic value) to art objects and the *value* that Nietzsche attributes to a certain kind of man, both resting on a set of common reactions, and on reactions that have much in common.

If this were a correct account of the matter what would we conclude? Would Christian morality, or any other, be vulnerable to Nietzsche's attack? From the comparison with aesthetic values one would say that it might be vulnerable, not because something had been proved against it but because men might come to care more about producing and preserving interesting and "splendid" individuals than about the ends of morality. For consider what the implications would be were it to be discovered that the human race would become physically uglier if morality flourished, or that justice and kindness destroyed beauty of some other kind. This could be considered irrelevant by those for whom moral values were more important than aesthetic values, and one might count as similarly irrelevant the discovery that "the highest power and splendor" was inconsistent with moral ends. Nevertheless morality might decline.

So far we have been considering Nietzsche's objections to one specific moral system—that of Christianity. But he had spoken of an attack on "all morality" and was ready to call himself an immoralist. Does he really have arguments reaching so far? Some of his arguments against Christian morality will be brought also against other moral systems. But with others this will not be possible. Nietzsche could not, for instance, accuse Aristotle of preaching a morality of pity, nor of extolling humility. On the contrary Aristotle's description of the *megalopsychos* who possesses the virtue of greatness of soul and "deserves and claims great things" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1123 a 15) has much in common with Nietzsche's picture of the "higher" type of man. Let us ask which part of Nietzsche's doctrines could justify us in thinking that morality—all morality—was indeed his target.

Is it relevant, for instance, that Nietzsche had no place in his ideology for the concept of *guilt*? About this he was quite explicit. He saw efforts to make men feel guilty as expressions of malice, and rejected guilt as a reaction to anything he himself would do. "Not to perpetrate cowardice against one's own acts. Not to leave them in the lurch afterwards! The bite of conscience is indecent" (Twilight "Maxims and Arrows" 10). This seems to prove nothing about whether Nietzsche was, as he said, rejecting all morality; it does not seem impossible that a man should have a morality without accepting guilt as a response to moral failure. It would have been different had he been rejecting the aim of self-discipline, but this Nietzsche never did. Like Callicles in

Plato's *Gorgias* Nietzsche objects to the "taming" of the strong man by society, but where Callicles urges that the strong should throw away all restraint and allow their passions full rein Nietzsche was scornful of such a suggestion. He does indeed oppose those who would weaken or even destroy a man's passions, but insists that a strong will belongs only to one who has imposed discipline and unity on his desires. So instead of objecting to morality on the ground that it involves discipline of the passions he says that this is its one merit. "What is essential and estimable in every morality is that it constitutes a long compulsion . . ." (BGE 188). Obviously drawing on his own experience he insists that what is most *natural* is a kind of self-discipline.

Every artist knows how far from any feeling of letting himself go his "most natural" state is—the free ordering, placing, disposing, giving form in the moment of "inspiration"—and how strictly and subtly he obeys thousandfold laws precisely then . . . (BGE 188).

To this extent, then, Nietzsche is at one with the moralist: he is preaching self-discipline and control of the passions. Nevertheless it may be argued that he is rightly to be called an immoralist. It is relevant here to recall that the word "morality" is derived from *mos* with its plural *mores*, and that in its present usage it has not lost this connexion with the *mores*—the rules of behaviour—of a society. For Nietzsche keeps some of his sharpest vituperation for those who try to impose social rules and a code of behaviour which shall be uniform throughout the community. He repeatedly rages against those who preach "Good and evil, good and evil, the same for all".

Let us finally consider how naive it is altogether to say: "Man ought to be such and such!" Reality shows us an enchanting wealth of types, the abundance of a lavish play and change of forms—and some wretched loafer of a moralist comments: "No! Man ought to be different." He even knows what man should be like, this wretched bigot and prig: he paints himself on the wall and comments, "*Ecce homo!*" (Twilight "Morality as Anti-Nature 6").

What will create health in one will enfeeble another, and each man must discover the rule of his own health. To desire that men should be virtuous

means that they should cease to be distinct

means that they should begin to resemble one another in their needs and demands—more clearly that they should perish—

The will to a single morality is thereby proved to be a tyranny

over other types by that type whom this single morality fits: it is a destruction or a levelling for the sake of the ruling type (whether to render the others no longer fearsome or to render them useful) (WP 315).

It may be suggested that Nietzsche, even if he will not accept rules of behaviour to be taught to all men, does at least set up ideals of character valid for all. Is it not the case that he refuses to praise anyone who is not, e.g., courageous and independent? This is of course true, and it does give some overlap, both in form and content, between a moral system and a set of teachings such as Nietzsche's. Nevertheless an injunction such as "seek your own health" is so neutral as to actual behaviour as to fail to reestablish the link with social norms. And even injunctions such as this one were not preached to everyone, since Nietzsche thought that many men were simply incapable of health and strength. There were, as we have already seen, cruel monsters to whom Nietzsche would not preach egoism. And as for the members of "the herd" he said that he had no wish to change them; the spirit of the herd should rule within the herd. He is not, he insists, trying to preach his kind of virtue generally: it belongs only to the rare and exceptional man.

These considerations should, I think, incline us to the view that Nietzsche is an immoralist rather than a special kind of moralist. And one is led in the same direction by the fact that he was prepared to throw out rules of justice in the interests of producing a stronger and more splendid type of man. I suggested that this implied a quasi-aesthetic rather than a moral set of values. Morality is necessarily connected with such things as justice and the common good, and it is a conceptual matter that this is so.

Why then should we still have a feeling, as I think we do, that Nietzsche has a great deal in common with the moralist and that he is not simply arguing from an incompatible and irreconcilable point of view? I think that this is due to the fact that in much of his work he can be seen as arguing about the way in which men must live in order to *live well*. It is the common ground between his system and that of traditional and particularly Greek morality that makes us inclined to think that he must be a moralist after all. For while Nietzsche loathed utilitarianism, with its concern for the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and its tendency to take pleasure and the absence of pain as the motive of all human action,

he himself was interested, one might say, in the conditions in which men—at least some men—would flourish. The issue is hard to get clear because Nietzsche, as well as introducing quasi-aesthetic criteria which are irrelevant in this context, also appeals to an idea of human good that is opposed to that of his opponents, and there is no concept that has proved more intractable than that of human happiness or human good. We are inclined to say at first sight that happiness is equivalent to contentment, and only to see that this cannot be the case when we notice, for example, that we count someone as unfortunate, not fortunate, if he suffers brain damage and thereafter lives the life of a happy child. But this correction shows that however little we are able to give an account of the idea of human good we have reason to agree with Nietzsche that a man is harmed if he is taught to be content with small pleasures and made unfit for enterprises requiring daring and independence. So, insofar as Nietzsche is suggesting that morality in general, and Christian morality in particular, has this effect he is at least arguing on moral ground. And of course there were more obvious ways in which the “good and virtuous” had been “harmed”. For Nietzsche saw them as resentful, hating themselves and others, and without strong purpose or desire. No man can live happily if he lives like this.

The conclusion of this discussion must be that Nietzsche’s “revaluation of values” is a most complex matter, and there is no single answer to the question as to what he was attacking or as to what the basis might be for the attack. It is not, therefore, surprising that we should shy away from the attempt to say whether he was right. I shall, however, try to say one or two things about this. First of all I would like to point out that everything depends on his theories and observations of human nature. If his attack on Christian morality and on other moralities is going to be worth anything he has got to be *right* about the effect of teaching pity and justice—that it merely hides the *ressentiment* of the weak while it does injury to the strong. And he would have to be right in seeing compassion as necessarily harmful to the compassionate man and of little use to the unfortunate. Moreover he would have to be right about the possibilities of a “healthy egoism” in the strong, even when this egoism could involve ruthlessness to those who are less fortunately placed. Now on some points in his psychological observation Nietzsche undoubtedly was right; he was right for instance to teach us

to be wary of one who finds other men most satisfactory when they are in need of his help, and to be wary also of the one who hates himself. At certain points his observation, and his anticipation of depth psychology, shows him as a brilliant psychologist. But one could not see Nietzsche as one who had a great knowledge of life and of the human heart. He describes convincingly what he knew thoroughly, as he knew the life of the lonely genius, the creative artist or thinker. It is, however, noticeable that his picture of the strong noble man fails to carry conviction when it deviates from this model; what he says about the conditions for this man's health seems to stem largely from his belief that the overriding and underlying principle of human behaviour was the will to power. Now it is notorious that general theories about the springs of action are traps for philosophers, and Nietzsche, who tried to work on a world historical scale, is an obvious victim of the delusion of having seen things whole. This would have to be shown, but *prima facie* one has no reason to trust Nietzsche's views of human nature beyond a very limited perspective, and one quite inadequate for his case. There is no reason to suppose that we really are in the dilemma that he insists on—that we either sacrifice the weak or else deform the strong. And in a way events have caught up with Nietzsche. How could one see the present dangers that the world is in as showing that there is too much pity and too little egoism around? One wonders what Nietzsche himself, in some ways a most humane man, would have said if he were living now, and could see inhumanity on its present scale, and in its present blatant forms.

NIETZSCHE AND MORAL CHANGE

KATHRYN PYNE PARSONS

What is moral change? An answer to this question is necessary if we are to answer the question, "What is essential to morality?" But among moral philosophers, Nietzsche stands almost alone in trying to examine the full structure of moral change.

There is a reason for this. The main body of tradition in ethics has occupied itself with the notions of obligation, moral principle, justification of acts under principle, justification of principle by argument. When moral change was considered at all, it was seen as change to bring our activities into conformity with our principles, as change to dispel injustice, as change to alleviate suffering. In short, moral change was seen as moral reform, with no other sort of moral change acknowledged or even imagined.

But moral reform is not the only sort of moral change. There is also moral revolution. Moral revolution has not to do with making our principles consistent, not to do with greater application of what we *now* conceive as justice. That is the task of moral reform, because its aim is the preservation of values. But the aim of moral revolution is the creation of values.

The traditional view in ethics has been unable to see this because moral creativity cannot be understood when the theory of morality is exhausted by the notions of obligation, principle, and justification. Nor can certain types of morality be understood, those which don't concern themselves (or those which concern themselves very little) with the notions of obligation, rightness of act, justification of principle.

By paying attention to moral revolution, Nietzsche was able to understand some of these things. I'd like to work with his insights and develop some of the points I think he was trying to make. This means that I shall not be doing "Nietz-

This essay was written especially for this volume.

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sche scholarship" but rather trying to apply some of his insights to theoretical and practical problems which face us. Given his views on the interpretation of literature, I don't believe this is against the Nietzschean spirit.

I shall argue that the narrow focus of traditional ethics makes it impossible to account for the behavior of the moral revolutionary *as* moral behavior. In seeing this, we shall see that the traditional view misrepresents the structure of morality, and why a Nietzschean typology of morals offers us new moral notions which are more adequate. In the end, we shall be able to distinguish moral revolution from moral reform on the basis of his typology and have greater insight into moral phenomena.

Nietzsche's views on morality are closely associated with his epistemological views.¹ This is essential, because the traditional views on morality go hand in hand with certain traditional views on the objectivity of science. Because of this interdependence, I shall consider a certain position held by Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn's epistemology bears strong resemblances to Nietzsche's, and the arguments he gives against traditional views in philosophy of science parallel arguments I shall give against traditional views in ethics. But unlike Nietzsche, Kuhn does not stress the interrelationship between morality and science, and so his work will be of only limited use to us. But that limited use is essential because he offers fairly clear suggestions on an epistemology, while Nietzsche's remarks are scattered and incomplete. In addition, Kuhn's notion of a paradigm (or of individuals working under a paradigm) will be useful in discussing structure of moral revolution.

I shall argue from a particular case of moral revolution—the women's revolution of the nineteenth century. This is one of the clearest examples of a moral revolution, and it offers ideal illustrations of some of the moral phenomena Nietzsche discusses.

In using this example, I shall go beyond Nietzsche—and perhaps in a direction he would not endorse. This is not because it is a *women's* revolution. Despite its name, it was a human revolution, affecting men, women, and children. And

¹ I found an unpublished paper by Simmie Freeman Turner, "Nietzsche on Truth," very helpful in understanding the relative merits of Danto's and Kaufmann's interpretations of Nietzsche's epistemology. Her paper contains a large number of quotations from Nietzsche's works, some of which I have used in this paper. See footnote 4.

despite his remarks, Nietzsche was no simple misogynist. His distaste for women was a distaste for the slavish character shown by nineteenth-century women. It was this slave morality in women which the women's revolution hoped to overthrow.

But the women's revolution was a revolution of the people, and Nietzsche looked sourly upon such things. His highest moral categories are aimed at capturing moral revolution in the *individual*. However, I think that these categories can be used to understand the individual moral revolutionary and, through him, moral revolution itself. In the end, I think such a use of Nietzsche's categories reveals the phenomena of morality in a way he himself was unable to reveal it.

Part I below considers Kuhn's claims that traditional views on science misconstrue both scientific revolution and "normal science" or science in stasis. Part II takes up some central arguments given by conservatives and revolutionaries in the nineteenth century to show that the traditional views in ethics cannot account for the behavior of the moral revolutionary as moral, while Part III suggests a new understanding of the women's revolution in light of Kuhnian and Nietzschean explanations.

Part IV considers a typology of morals based on certain Nietzschean distinctions. With the aid of the typology, a separation is made between moral revolution and moral reform in Part V, and it is suggested that Nietzsche is correct in taking the essential parts of morality to consist in creation and self-overcoming.

I

"Truth" is not something there, that might be found or discovered—but something that must be created . . . ([9e] 552).

There is a certain traditional philosophical view of science which goes hand in hand with traditional views in ethics. In sketching this view, I'm mainly leaning on positivist accounts, but not only the positivists hold the relevant principles.² The most fundamental thesis of this view is that science is "objective." What that means to a traditionalist is that there are

² The relevant "objective" position is discussed at length in (11). Schefler displays a very deep misunderstanding of the Kuhn-Feyerabend position in this book—one which is similar to the misunderstanding of the Nietzschean epistemology and ethics shown by superficial readers. Some of the background to the Kuhn-Feyerabend position is discussed in (10a) and (10c).

certain observable facts and regularities in the world, and it is the job of science to formulate theories accounting for them.

Science explains the regularities. It explains them by postulating theoretical principles from which statements expressing the regularities can be derived. *Ultimately*, it is in terms of its ability to explain observable regularities that a scientific theory is *justified*.

Of course, the matter is somewhat more complex than this. One theory may be better than another because it is more general, i.e., it explains more of the observable regularities. A very general theory will receive justification because it "explains" less general theories, that is, less general theories can be derived from it (given suitable connections between theoretical terms). For example, Newtonian celestial mechanics was a very general theory because it explained many observable regularities, and part of the justification for it was that the Galilean laws concerning freely falling bodies near the earth could allegedly be derived from it. Again, a narrow theory may be justified by being subsumed under a more general theory. Thus the Galilean laws receive some justification in allegedly being derivable from the Newtonian.³

Given this interpretation of objectivity and justification, the traditional view on the growth of science simply follows. Science grows by accretion. Any new theory introduced must be consistent with the principles of those old theories which are in accord with observation. We progress in science by retaining that part of the older principles which really captures the phenomena, and we proceed to a new theory which is more general in explaining *more* of the observable phenomena, while still explaining what the old theory explained. With luck, this new theory also allows more exact prediction of the observable.

In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn suggests that there is a great difference between "normal science" and "revolutionary science." If we look at science in periods of change, revolutionary science, we can see that not only is traditional philosophy of science too narrow in dealing with only one sort of scientific activity, it also misconstrues even that sort in its myopia.

³ I say that these laws are "allegedly" derivable because they are alleged to be so by some philosophers holding the traditional view. Paul Feyerabend criticizes this view and argues that they are not so derivable in (3b).

Kuhn says that science proceeds as "normal science" until some crisis is reached. Perhaps some problem which was supposed to be solved by the theory resists solution even though the best minds in the field have struggled with it. Perhaps difficulties arise in accounting for observable phenomena which can be taken care of only by tinkering with the theory until it turns into a "monster," as the Ptolemaic theory did.

The traditional view would say here that the old theory can no longer explain the observable regularities and that a new theory must be developed, one which preserves those old generalizations which are supported by observation, one which explains the observable regularities which the old theory couldn't. Kuhn disagrees. He claims that what is involved in cases of scientific revolution is

a reconstruction of the field from a new foundation, a reconstruction which changes some of the field's most elementary generalizations as well as most of its paradigm methods and applications ([7] p. 85).

Elsewhere, he adds,

At times of revolution, when the normal-scientific tradition changes, the scientist's perception of his environment must be reeducated—in some familiar situations he must learn to see a new gestalt. After he has done so, the world of his research will seem, here and there, incommensurable with the one he had inhabited before ([7] p. 112).

In fact, this is why schools of scientists holding different theories usually seem at cross-purposes.

The suggestion here is that science does not proceed by accretion but by leaps and bounds, and the leaps are to a new perspective. The whole world looks different. "Each theory creates its own experience."

It is not my aim in this paper to examine Nietzschean epistemology. As I mentioned above, Kuhn's epistemology is far more easily accessible. But it is worth noting that in his opposition to the "objectivity" claimed for science by those who think "naturalistically," Nietzsche's opinions closely resemble Kuhn's. He says,

Forgive me as an old philologist who cannot desist from the malice of putting his finger on bad modes of interpretation: but "nature's conformity to law," of which you physicists talk so proudly, as though—why it exists only owing to your interpretation . . . ([9a] 22).

It is our human way to rationalize the world through science. Science does not describe the "objective" reality, it *creates* the world of science.⁴ Then it looks at its creation and says, "This is what *is*. This is fact." Seeing that, one sees that the traditional, "naturalistic" account is thoroughly and fundamentally mistaken. We ought not to talk in terms of a world of observable regularities "out there" which science slowly captures. We need a new way of construing even normal scientific activities.

Instead of taking theories and observation as fundamental in explaining the structure of science, Kuhn prefers to talk in terms of "paradigms." There is much unclarity in the Kuhnian notion of a paradigm. But in the idea of a *scientist working under a paradigm* is a notion which will be useful to us.

Scientists working under a single paradigm are trained in the same methods of research and experiment, often in schools and laboratories having historical and social connections. They take as exemplars the same major experiments or written works. For example, Newton's *Opticks* (especially the *Queries*) was studied as giving prime examples of experiment construction by eighteenth-century scientists, and his *Principia* exemplified scientific reasoning. Scientists working under a single paradigm accept the same theories and principles. They agree on which problems their theories are expected to solve. They agree on which sorts of observable regularities are relevant as evidence, and they agree on the ways in which observations are "properly" made.

But theories and principles are not simply sentences which

⁴I must put in a *caveat* here. In this paper, I am emphasizing the *creative* aspect of science and morality as an antidote to certain traditional views. Nietzsche did the same. This leads to an overemphasis on the contribution of interpretation, which comes out clearly in the quotation from ([9a] 22). "Nature's conformity to law" does not exist only owing to an interpretation (but it does not exist owing to some metaphysically real and unique structure of reality either, and that is the point). I think much of the dispute over what Nietzsche meant by "truth" is due to the fact that we ourselves don't have an adequate view on truth in light of which to take his hints. Simmie Freeman Turner has argued in (13) that Nietzsche indeed holds the perspectivist position which Danto attributes to him, but that he also used the word "truth" in a common-sense way. Turner says this usage can be accounted for by talking about the truth of one perspective as compared to another. I make attempts at understanding the notion of truth in a similar way in Part V of (10c), though the aim there is not to shed light on Nietzsche and, in fact, the position was developed without benefit of Nietzsche and for solving some rather different problems from those he was concerned with.

have their meaning given in Plato's heaven. They are statements which are *understood* by the scientists in terms of their training, their exemplars, the observations they take as relevant, the problems they see *as* problems. All these enter into scientific understanding of theories and principles.

This does not mean that, once the new paradigm comes into existence, there is no comparing its theories with the theories and principles of the old paradigm. I have argued elsewhere that it is possible to give a criterion of univocality which will allow comparison of scientific theories embedded in different paradigms (10b). But before the comparison can take place, the new paradigm must come into being, and more important, the univocality judgment and the comparison must be done from the point of view of the new paradigm.

So it appears that the key features of normal science are not quite what the traditionalists said they were. In fact, looking at normal science in a Kuhnian way, we might say its key features were these:

(1) Observable regularities which are relevant to the science, to the testing of its principles and the judgment of its generality, are determined by the paradigm.

(2) The problems which the theory faces, and which it may be expected to solve, are determined by the paradigm.

(3) Thus justification of scientific principles is strongly influenced by the paradigm, since this justification is in terms of ability to account for observable regularities and is (sometimes) in terms of support by other scientific theories within the paradigm.

(4) The task of the scientist doing normal science is to solve the problems determined by the paradigm, to articulate the theories and principles of his field (thus achieving greater generality, greater justification), and to develop better instruments, yielding finer methods of measurement of phenomena which are determined to be scientifically relevant by the paradigm.

What is important here is this: if scientific behavior is construed only in terms of normal science, then the scientific revolutionary is going to have to proceed "unscientifically." Depending on *how* revolutionary he is, he will be unable to justify his view. The revolutionary will take new principles to be important, and he will see the world differently. He will take new regularities to be important, and he will reconstrue the relevance of some old ones. He's rejecting the old paradigm, and so he can't give justification in its terms. More-

over, since paradigms are embedded in tradition and training, and since theories are understood through that tradition and training, his theories will be *incapable of full understanding and justification* until a new paradigm comes into being. In scientific revolution, embracing the new theory resembles conversion rather than change of conviction by rational argument.

II

[Morality] works against our acquiring new experiences and correcting morality accordingly, which means that morality works against a better, newer morality.⁵

The traditional philosopher of science explains the structure of science in terms of theories, scientific principles, observations, and, in addition, all the scientific methods of justification which he is at pains to explicate. The traditional moral philosopher explains the structure of morality in terms of moral principles, as well as all the moral methods of justification which he is at pains to explicate. In both cases, change is said to take place by reform.

According to the traditional view, it is through moral principles that situations are categorized as morally relevant or not. For example, the principle "One ought to tell the truth" picks out situations in which I am reporting facts to others as morally relevant but leaves situations in which I am not (situations in which I am alone and eating supper, for example) as morally neutral. This means that moral principles enter into our activities in two ways. They enter *internally*, in that I categorize the world of my possible actions in their terms and act in accord with them or not. They enter *externally* in that others see and judge my acts in their terms, and I justify my own acts to others in part by their means. It is a fundamental assumption here that morally proper behavior must be morally *justifiable* behavior.

Moral principles themselves must be justified. Sometimes this is done in terms of higher-level moral principles. But there are *very* high-level moral principles ("One ought to act so as to bring about the greatest happiness. . .") which require metaphysical or philosophical justification.

It is important to look at moral justifications which are actually given to see how all of these elements enter. I shall do this in some detail, to show that the conservative fares

⁵ The remark is from *The Dawn*, 19. It is quoted on p. 138 of (2).

well and the revolutionary fares very ill indeed under this traditional view of morality.

During the nineteenth century in the United States, there was an attempt to bring about a moral revolution—an attempt which was in part successful. The main attack was on those values which operated to keep women in a morally, culturally, and socially subordinate position, as well as a legally subordinate one. That is, the thrust was against the *humanly* subordinate position of women, against a double standard of humanity, one which adversely affected the moral being of *both* men and women. The organized part of this moral revolution deteriorated into a movement toward mere reform as the twentieth century began, with the increased emphasis on woman suffrage. So its earlier phases are the ones of interest to us. But these earlier phases constitute one of the clearest examples of moral revolution there is, and they offer admirable illustrations of some of the moral phenomena which Nietzsche emphasized but which philosophers in ethics generally overlook.

There was an argument presented by Senator Frelinghuysen of New Jersey shortly after the Civil War which captures the essence of the conservative position against the women's revolution.

It seems to me as if the God of our race has stamped upon [the women of America] a milder, gentler nature, which not only makes them shrink from, but disqualifies them for the turmoil and battle of public life. They have a higher and holier mission. It is in retiracy to make the character of coming men. Their mission is at home, by their blandishments and their love to assuage the passions of men as they come in from the battle of life, and not themselves by joining in the contest to add fuel to the very flames. It will be a sorry day for this country when those vestal fires of love and piety are put out ([4] p. 149).

Eleanor Flexner, an historian of the women's rights struggle, says that emotional arguments like this characterized all debates down to 1919, and that no rational argument was able to make a dent in them ([4] p. 150). But she is mistaken in dubbing this a mere emotional argument. It is a perfectly rational justification of the moral claim that one ought to oppose the attempts of the women's rights workers, and there are reasons that the moral revolutionaries couldn't make a dent in it. Let's look more carefully at the argument.

(1) Senator Frelinghuysen's justification uses the scientific claim that women differ by nature from men. We might call

this the "Aristotelian claim," after an early espouser of it. It is supported on the one hand by a vague, "Aristotelian" scientific theory (still held in the nineteenth century) about the natures of individuals and the relations of these to their natural capacities. One's nature attaches to him as a member of a kind. For example, all women have the same nature in this sense.

The claim that women differ by nature from men is overwhelmingly supported by differences in their behavior. In ancient Greece, nineteenth-century America, and even twentieth-century America, women did not show the abilities to command or the abilities to reason which men showed. They were in fact timid and dependent, better followers than leaders. Of contributions to human development deemed worthy of report in the history books, virtually all were made by men. What great women statesmen, scientists, musicians, painters, religious leaders, or philosophers does history show? Such data not only support the claim that there is a difference between men and women, they show what the difference is.

In addition, the claim for the difference was supported on religious grounds, for example, on the basis of standard interpretations of Genesis. Woman's place, and her tasks, were taken to have been intended by "the God of our race."

(2) Senator Frelinghuysen's justification presupposes the moral claim that *one ought to act according to his or her nature*. This claim is essential, since some women showed better abilities to lead and reason than the senator did.

This moral principle was a central one, and it was considered generally impeccable down to our own time. It has been used, for example, to justify condemnation of sexual deviates and to justify monstrous treatment of homosexuals on grounds of "unnaturalness" even in our own day.

The principle can be given religious support—we ought to act as God intended. But even in the nineteenth century, it was given other support. It is *harmful* to the person to act against his nature.⁶ As a worthy group of Massachusetts ministers said in attacking the Grimké sisters' efforts toward women's liberation,

We invite your attention to the dangers which at present seem to threaten the FEMALE CHARACTER with widespread and permanent injury ([5] p. 39).

⁶ In our own day, the whole Freudian view on neurosis has operated to support Frelinghuysen's moral principle.

This indicates that Senator Frelinghuysen's case rests ultimately on the high-level moral principle that one should act so as to promote the highest moral character in oneself and in others.⁷

Through the senator's argument itself, we see that the traditional view would classify his activity as morally relevant, and it appears that he has justified his behavior. But what of the moral revolutionary? We need to look at her behavior through the glasses of the traditional moral philosopher. I'd like to take Sarah Grimké as protagonist here and consider some of the moral reasoning and argument she used in 1837, in her *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women*. Like Senator Frelinghuysen's arguments, hers involve claims that were put forward throughout the nineteenth century—for example, we find their echo in Mill's later and better-known paper "The Subjection of Women."

In brief, Miss Grimké argued that what appear to be natural differences between men and women are due to differences in education, training, and expectation. She claimed that "women are educated from childhood to regard themselves as inferior" ([5] p. 44), and that "our powers of mind have been crushed, as far as man could do it, our sense of morality has been impaired by his interpretation of our duties" ([5] p. 42). She argued directly against the interpretation of the Bible used to support the "natural difference" view, saying that Genesis actually shows that God created men and women equal.

There is also an egalitarian principle underlying the arguments in her *Letters*, one which is clearly present in her argument in favor of equal pay for equal work ([5] pp. 45–46). We might make it explicit in Mill's terms:

The principle of the modern movement in morals and politics, is that conduct, and conduct alone, entitles to respect . . . that, above all, merit and not birth, is the only rightful claim to power and authority ([8] p. 177).

Now these remarks seem directly aimed at conservative

⁷ There is also a means-ends argument included by the senator. It involves the evaluative claim that maintenance of the home is good, and the factual claim that granting the women's demands will lead to the destruction of the home. It is a long-lived argument and was used recently by Illinois House Majority Leader Henry Hyde, who opposed ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment on the grounds that it constitutes "an attack on the home and motherhood" (Chicago *Sun-Times*, Friday, May 19, 1972). Frelinghuysen and Hyde are correct.

arguments against the women's movement. Living in the 1970s, most of us would accept them. But that fact is not at all to the point, for the question is whether they constituted arguments which could serve as a justification for Miss Grimké's behavior in 1837, and whether they could serve as a basis for counting her behavior as moral behavior—much less morally *proper* behavior. I shall argue that they could not so serve, that they are at best calls for a new paradigm.

(1) Miss Grimké's claim that nurture, not nature, determines the difference in behavior and ability in men and women is meant to undermine the claim that the Aristotelian theory is data-supported. The form of the argument here is exactly correct: to undermine the empirical support for the Aristotelian theory, the data must be reinterpreted, explained by a different scientific theory. Unfortunately, Miss Grimké was ahead of her time in her scientific as well as her moral views.⁸ There *was* no scientific theory to support her interpretation of the data. This point is important, but perhaps difficult to grasp in this case because we now accept a scientific view properly interpreting her hypothesis. But merely putting a scientific hypothesis into *words* does not constitute giving a justification.

If the hypothesis is understood against the background of the conservative paradigm, then "education" and "nature" will be understood as interpreted under that paradigm, and evidence for the hypothesis will be construed as it is construed under that paradigm. What Miss Grimké needs is an alternate theory on nature and education and their effects on human capacity and behavior. Her argument at best *suggests* that a scientific justification for her position can be developed. It is not itself a justification but rather a call for a new scientific paradigm.

One might object here that the Aristotelian sort of theory is subject to a direct test which does not require development of an alternative theory. Miss Grimké herself suggests such a test:

All I ask of our brethren is that they will take their feet from off our necks and permit us to stand upright on that ground which

⁸ Grimké's sociological and psychological analyses in the *Letters* are remarkable. See her remarks on the "butterflies of the fashionable world" in the *Old South* (pp. 43-44). Many people, including Nietzsche, have criticized these "butterflies," but Grimké's analysis could have been written in the mid-twentieth century. Her criticism is very positive and gets at the roots of the difficulty.

God designed us to occupy. If he has not given us the rights which have, as I conceive, been wrested from us, we shall soon give evidence of our inferiority . . . ([5] p. 38).

Such a "direct test" would no more falsify the Aristotelian theory than it did the more recent Freudian one. Freudian theory postulated a difference in nature for men and women too, a difference which was strikingly similar to that postulated under the Aristotelian theory. Behavior of women which might falsify the theory was accommodated by altering the theory slightly, to admit that some few women had "masculine natures" (and were thus natural anomalies). But the vast majority of women were supposed to have natural feminine natures. Aggressiveness and "unwomanly" behavior among these are explained by saying that they are driven by penis envy into a neurotic emulation of men. Such emulation was judged to be an illness requiring treatment to bring the woman to accept her nature. To change the educational process so as to develop these unnatural characteristics in all women would be, in Freudian eyes as well as the eyes of the Massachusetts ministers, "to threaten the FEMALE CHARACTER with widespread and permanent injury" ([5] p. 39).

But of course in asking that "our brethren . . . take their feet from off our necks," Miss Grimké is not merely suggesting a test for the conservative theory. She is making a call for the moral revolution.

(2) The claim that merit, not birth, is the only rightful claim to power and authority is aimed at overthrowing the moral principle that one ought to act according to his nature as it limits the participation of women in society. However, rather than relying on that principle as it is understood under the conservative moral paradigm, Mill is suggesting a *reinterpretation* of it. For that principle was understood to mean that birth into a particular social *class* should not disqualify an adult male. The principle cannot support Mill's position because it presupposes his position on women. Again, we have merely a call to bring about the revolution, and an example of how a particular moral principle would be reinterpreted under the new paradigm.

In the case of legal principles, we have a formal structure (the court system) to take care of interpretation of their meaning. An examination of the changes in interpretation of the Bill of Rights, for example, shows how paradigm-

dependent our legal and governmental principles are for their interpretation. My claim here is that an analogous situation exists with regard to scientific and moral principles, even so-called "trans-societal" principles. It may be less well noticed only because we lack a formal structure to take care of their interpretation.

There is, however, one principle which does not seem quite so paradigm-dependent for its understanding, and that is the hedonistic act utilitarian principle.⁹ The principle might be stated roughly in this way: One ought to choose that act which produces a greater surplus of happiness over unhappiness than any alternative act. What *makes* people happy before and after the revolution will be different. But a utilitarian would hope for psychological tests of happiness which are independent of the *moral* paradigm at least.

There are general difficulties in applying this principle, since a comparison of possible acts and their possible consequences is necessary. This is particularly difficult in the case of moral revolution, since calculating the consequences of the revolutionary's acts requires knowing what *would* make people happy after the revolution as well as calculating their degrees of happiness.

These difficulties are not the major ones. It is more important that there is scarcely a person who would hold the unmodified hedonistic act utilitarian principle. This is because the resultant *quantity* of happiness is at best only one element we're concerned with. Fairness in the distribution of happiness is also important. The methods used to bring about the happiness are important. To be acceptable, this utilitarian principle needs to be "restricted" by other principles, particularly a principle of justice. But other principles, *particularly* the principle of justice, are heavily dependent on the paradigm for their interpretation.

If a revolutionary wishes, he may give some justification to his actions by using the hedonistic act utilitarian principle. If he cannot himself accept that principle unsupplemented—and I am sure that there is scarcely one who will

⁹ Rule utilitarianism (under which rules are justified by the consequences of adopting them, and acts justified by the rules) and pure act utilitarianism (under which acts are justified by the goodness resulting) won't do as principles under which the revolutionary can justify himself. The understanding of the rules and the understanding of "goodness" (except where this is happiness or pleasure) are thoroughly paradigm-dependent.

accept it—then there seems to be no way for him to give a justification.

The revolutionary must, then, proceed without proper justification. But this is not all. Most philosophers holding a traditional view don't feel that moral principles merely enter after the fact, merely enter in giving a justification. One doesn't merely act willy-nilly, then fish about for some principle which will justify the act. One assesses the situation morally before acting. But even to assess the situation as moral requires the use of moral categories, thus principles of one sort or another (or so it seems, on the traditional view).

The moral revolutionary cannot do this. If he is to be seen as acting under principles at all, they must be principles interpreted under the new paradigm. Principles as understood under the old paradigm will not properly characterize the moral features of the current situation. But the new paradigm is not yet in existence. So even if the revolutionary cites principles, even if he himself says the words to himself, he has only a limited understanding of those words. Let me support this by a quotation from Paul Feyerabend:

One often takes it for granted that a clear and distinct understanding of new ideas precedes and should precede any formulation and any institutional expression of them. . . . [but] we must expect, for example, that the idea of liberty could be made clear only by means of the very same actions which were supposed to create liberty. Creation of a thing, and creation plus full understanding of a correct idea of the thing, are very often parts of one and the same indivisible process and they cannot be separated without bringing the process to a standstill ([3a] p. 24).

The arguments of the moral revolutionary constitute a call for change, not a justification. But even as a call, they are not statements of principles interpreted fully under the new paradigm but a *hint* at a direction in which to go in the creative process.

III

That the value of the world lies in our interpretation . . . ; that previous interpretations have been perspective valuations by virtue of which we can survive in life, i.e., in the will to power for the growth of power . . . ([9e] 616).

Some traditional philosophers will not be surprised that the moral revolutionary cannot justify himself and, if he is seen

as acting morally at all, he is seen as being *evil*. A contemporary Hobbesian might grant that revolution is sometimes necessary (though he would see any such revolution as political). But since the only way to judge rightness and wrongness and obligation is under the laws and rules of the existing system, the revolutionary must be a traitor or subversive. It is only after the revolution that he can justify what he has done—if the revolution is a success, that is. Here, as with Nietzsche's morality of custom (*Sitte*), change is immoral (*unsittlich*) ([9b] 18).

But this is unsatisfactory so far as moral theory goes, and it is certainly unsatisfactory if we try to apply moral theory to practice. It allows no adequate explanation of the structure of moral revolution *as moral*. And it sacrifices whatever light may be shed on normal morality and the traditional view itself by the phenomenon of moral revolution. We should recall that Kuhn suggests that the traditional view on science be *overthrown* in the light of the structure of scientific revolution.

Seen in a Nietzschean light, moral revolution contains what is essential to morality in a way that morality in stasis does not. In focusing on morality in stasis, and especially on morality as it concerns justification and principle, the traditional philosopher is "human, all too human." He offers the rationalization that is necessary to the herd, the rationalization which operates *against* creation and change. This will become more evident in Part IV. Here, we might look again at the women's revolution to put traditional ethics in perspective.

I mentioned in Part II that the data that supported Senator Frelinghuysen's conservative view on women were *facts*. Women understood themselves and their lives in terms of the way they were characterized under this view. Miss Grimké saw this when she said that women are "educated from earliest childhood, to regard themselves as inferior creatures . . ." ([5] p. 46).

This picture of women was not one which was imposed from outside by a sexist science. Kuhn would say that the science created the world picture and created its facts. But the adequate characterization of the situation is given far better by Nietzsche than by Kuhn. For it was Nietzsche's insight that our science does not operate independently of our morality. Science and morality work together not only in giving us a picture of a world but also in creating that world

and the human beings in it.¹⁰ I think that this is evident from the discussions in Part II. But those discussions were concerned with principle and argument, and there is more to the matter than that.

Throughout written history, the structure of the family has been closely integrated with the structure of the society, the one supporting the other. Revolutionaries and conservatives in the nineteenth century used two radically different analogies in describing the family and the relationship of husband and wife within it. Revolutionaries see the family structure on analogy with a tyrant-slave or master-servant relationship ("The Subjection of Women"). Conservatives see it roughly on analogy with a parent-child relationship. The husband protects the weaker wife. There is a biological basis for the parent-child relationship, and they see one in the relationship of husband to wife.¹¹

The family was seen by conservatives as a unit made up of individuals with specialized functions—the social closely following the biological. Each individual must fulfill his function, for that is necessary for the survival of the unit. And survival of the family unit is necessary for the survival of the society. Conservatives argued that the whole theory of government and society presupposed this view of the family, in terms of this division of functions.¹²

Women were different from men in their capacities and personalities because it was *necessary* for them to be different

¹⁰ See footnote 4.

¹¹ This difference in analogies constitutes one of the core differences between the conservative and the revolutionary. The basic vision of the revolutionary springs from seeing the family structure in light of the master-servant analogy. It is the beginnings of their new way of seeing the world. In this regard, we might notice the importance of analogies in science on the one hand, and the use of analogies by Nietzsche on the other (his use of master and slave as analogies in setting out types of moralities is one striking example). Overemphasis on principles leads to overlooking the importance of analogies.

¹² This structural interdependence was explicitly brought out by many conservatives. Consider a remark made by Senator Williams of Oregon shortly after the Civil War: "When God married our first parents in the garden according to that ordinance they were made 'bone of one bone and flesh of one flesh' and the whole theory of government and society proceeds upon the assumption that their interests are one . . ." ([4] p. 148). Revolutionaries tended to ignore this interdependence, although it is stressed by Engels in "The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State." That work, of course, was too late for our revolutionaries to use (1884), and even if it had not been, it was far too politically radical.

from men. The survival of the family and state depended on it. This offers a striking confirmation of Nietzsche's claim that what is necessary for our survival we see as truth. Of course, to take something as truth doesn't make it true. But Nietzsche remarks on this,

'No matter how strongly a thing may be believed, strength of belief is no criterion of truth.' But what is truth? Perhaps a kind of belief that has become a condition of life? ([9e] 532).

Without departing from Nietzsche, we might say that what is necessary for our survival *becomes truth*. Theory follows fact, and human facts of this sort follow need. The traditional view has stood the matter on its head.

The way in which our principles are embedded in fact makes it clear that a moral revolution cannot be one based on principle, with its major struggle one to make act conform with principle. That is at best the task of moral reform. The women's revolution had to proceed by making the facts different. The revolutionaries had to proceed by bringing a new paradigm into being. Principles followed. They followed as they always have, as a rationalization of what is and what is necessary. Traditionalists overlook this because they focus on "normal morality," morality in *stasis*. Of that, Nietzsche says, "Whatever lives long is gradually so saturated with reason that its irrational origins become improbable" ([9b] 1). But what seems improbable may nonetheless not be.

A moral, social, and scientific paradigm (the paradigm of a conceptual scheme) is not merely something through which we see the world. It is something which shapes the facts of the human world. The traditional view deals only with a certain sort of *post hoc* rationalization, taking this rationalization as what is essential to morality. Accepting it as the whole story, we cannot understand the moral revolutionary and we cannot understand normal morality either.

To understand these things, and to understand how morality might be liberated from necessity, we need to look at *other* views on morality, or rather, other *moralties* alternative to those picked out by the traditional view. In Nietzsche's writings, we find alternatives.

IV

The beautiful exists just as little as does *the good*, or *the true*. In every case it is a question of the conditions of preservation of a certain type of man . . . ([9e] 804).

Nietzsche's interest in psychological and developmental aspects of morality, his emphasis on transvaluation of values and on self-overcoming make him one of the few philosophers who have put "normal morality" in perspective. But in understanding this, it's important to put aside the dogmatism of the traditional view. Otherwise, the transvaluation is seen merely as the replacement of one set of values by another (all encapsulated in principles), and self-overcoming is seen merely as self-discipline of the usual moral sort.

If we look at a (somewhat) Nietzschean categorization of different varieties of morality, I think it's possible to understand the varieties of moral revolution and of normal morality more fully. In doing this, I'd like to consider "slave morality," "morality of the person of conscience," and what I shall call "noble morality" as varieties.¹³ Using these notions to pick out varieties of morality requires leaving aside negative or positive connotations of "slave" or "noble."

What might slave morality be? A slave's life, *qua* slave, is full of duties. Freedom is essential to any moral agent, but the slave's freedom consists in his freedom to obey or disobey. Because there are sanctions which follow upon disobedience of a rule, the slave must be able to *justify* what he does. Sometimes the sanctions are external. If the slave cannot give an acceptable justification, he may be punished by the law courts (a political sanction) or by the ill opinion and acts of his compatriots (a moral sanction). But sometimes the sanctions are internalized, and conscience and feelings of guilt are the instruments ensuring obedience. In fact, the primary value in slave morality is obedience, and it's axiomatic that the moral person is the obedient person: obedient to the moral rule.

It should be evident that what Nietzsche calls "slave morality" comes very close, as a *type* of morality, to what I've been calling "morality on the traditional view."

Nietzsche felt that a fairly widespread sort of morality which grew out of the Christian tradition was a slave morality—a morality of the weak, with their fear of strength and their resentment. Women constituted slaves *par excellence* in this sense, and that fact may explain some of Nietzsche's diatribes against them. It was *this* sort of slave morality which the women's rights workers had to root out of them-

¹³ I speak of "noble morality" rather than "master morality" for reasons given below.

selves. But for our typology, it is better to abstract from these characteristics and see slave morality as one involving principle, rule, and justification, with acts taken as the basic moral units and with obedience to rule the cardinal virtue.

What I shall call "noble morality" differs essentially from slave morality, not in being a morality of the strong, but in being a different *type* of morality. It happens that strength of one sort or another is required in this morality, and that the weak find protection under slave morality, and this is morally and psychologically important. But more important to us is the difference in their structures.

Within noble morality, there is no concern with rules, obedience, and justification. The person, not the act, is the basic moral unit. Nietzsche says, "It is obvious that moral designations were everywhere applied to *human beings* and only later, derivatively, to actions" ([9a] 260). But this shouldn't be taken to mean that in noble morality it is the *person* who is judged, justified, etc., instead of the act. Rather, "The noble type of man experiences *itself* as determining values; it does not need approval" ([9a] 260). The noble person apprehends himself as worthy, and he *confers* values in his acts.

I have called this sort of morality "noble morality" rather than "master morality" because, in Nietzsche's discussions, master morality is sometimes not clearly distinct from what I shall call "the morality of the person of conscience." It is not clearly a type which Nietzsche himself set out, although some readers of Nietzsche seem to interpret his master morality in this way.

In discussing the noble distinction "good-bad" (which contrasts with the slave distinction "good-evil"), Nietzsche explicitly mentions the very ancient Greeks ([9c] I 5). These "noble ones" do not have a noble morality in my sense because they have not attained the necessary, partial "self-overcoming" (see their behavior in [9c] I 11). But we might take a later development of this morality, as exemplified by some ideals in classical Greece, to represent noble morality.

Here, the noble person sees himself as worthy (see Aristotle's "great-souled person"). He confers value in his acts. He has overcome himself in the sense Kaufmann stresses: He has triumphed over his impulses ([6] chs. 7, 8). He is disciplined, so much so that his triumph and discipline flow from his nature. He is not a slave to a moral code. In fact, on a somewhat Aristotelian analysis, his valuations are

the *foundation* of values for the society. A just act is one which the just person would do, and to act justly is to do such an act as the just person would do it.

There is a third type of morality, the morality of the person of conscience (following Nietzsche, [9c] II 2). This individual is "master of a free will." He is free *not* to obey or disobey, as the slave is free. Like the noble person, he is free from the slavery to the moral codes and opinions of his society. But in addition, he is free to create.

The person of conscience creates values, but only by creating himself. Here, I think self-overcoming has a different import from that which it has under noble morality. Noble morality involves only a partial self-overcoming. Self-overcoming in the person of conscience requires a self-disciplining, it is true. But it cannot properly be described as reason overcoming impulse, as Kaufmann describes self-overcoming ([6] p. 235). Rather, an overcoming of the *entire* old self is involved, of the old ways of perceiving oneself and the world, of the old ways of *being*. It is an overcoming which is *necessarily* a creation of oneself. It involves, in part, a phenomenon analogous to what is currently called "consciousness raising." One overcomes the old self which is structured within the old paradigm and becomes "The sovereign individual, like only to himself" ([9c] II 2). In this self-overcoming, one creates himself anew, and creates values.

Given these unfortunately sketchy remarks on types of morality, we might use them to look at moral phenomena.

First, we might see (as Nietzsche did) that different societies emphasize one sort of morality over others. Greek society emphasized noble morality. Nineteenth-century Anglo-American society emphasized slave or rule morality. It is only a myopia induced by the traditional view on morality that would bring us to see these differences as a mere difference in *moral code*.

Second, we might use the typology to investigate different sorts of moral phenomena which occur within a single society. Nietzsche himself suggests that master and slave morality "at times . . . occur directly along side each other—even in the same human being, within a *single* soul" ([9a] 260). Our own society seems to be a mixed one.

Finally, we might use the typology to look at moral change. The first thing we would learn is that a moral revolution need not result in replacement of one set of principles by another, or in the reinterpretation of principles held under the old

paradigm. It might result in *a morality of a new type*. This parallels the way a political revolution might result not in the replacement of one form of government by another, but in an anarchistic society.

The second thing we would learn is that the moral revolutionary *is* behaving morally, but under a different type of morality from that which the traditional view recognizes. I mentioned in Part II that the women's revolution workers had to *change the way they were as women* in bringing about their revolution. I don't want to claim that all—or even that any—of these women became “persons of conscience.” But it is *that* sort of morality which best captures the moral behavior of each of them, as revolutionaries.

Each of the serious workers in this revolution had to overcome herself in the sense of morally disciplining herself. But she also had to create herself as an individual like only to herself. That she later met others like her is irrelevant. The southern aristocrat who was Sarah Grimké, the overworked farm girl who was Lucy Stone, the slave mother of thirteen who became Sojourner Truth, all had to be overcome. Each woman had to create herself anew, in a process of self-overcoming which took no models (there were none to take) and which continued as long as she was a revolutionary. Today we have example after example of black young people who have gone through this self-overcoming, and many others of us have gone through it in a more modest way.

Nietzsche's morality of the person of conscience captures the morality of individual revolutionaries far better than the traditional view does. It offers a beginning for understanding how moral revolutions take place. As we saw in Part III, it is necessary to change the world, to create new facts and a new paradigm, in bringing about the revolution. The process of self-overcoming explains some of this, and it indicates that the creation of values begins with the creation of the individual revolutionary as a new sort of human being.

But this is individual morality. It is not the aim of the moral revolutionary to become the “sovereign individual” when this brings with it the *isolation* of uniqueness. And given Nietzsche's attitude toward revolutions of the people, we would not expect his favorite moral type to fit revolutionaries too well.

The revolutionary cannot create himself in isolation as a sovereign individual. Rather, he must begin to create himself as the “first of his kind.” This creation, this self-overcoming,

continues throughout the revolutionary process. But it is part of his task as a revolutionary of the people to help *them* to overcome themselves, to help each create himself as a new kind of individual. In the course of this process, the new paradigm comes into being—that is, the new values are created.

V

. . . art is *worth more* than truth ([9e] 853).

Given all of this, we can begin to see the difference between the moral revolutionary and the moral reformer. Both activities involve a struggle against the conservative forces in power. But the moral revolutionary is like the scientific revolutionary in struggling to overthrow some part of the present structure. In doing this, he must overcome himself in the process of the revolution. He must work to help his people overcome themselves. And this is a necessary process to the end that a new kind of human being may be brought into being, and thus a new paradigm and new values as well. For a moral revolution essentially involves creation of a new human being. It was one of Nietzsche's insights that moralities determine *kinds* of persons.

The reformer, on the other hand, is doing "normal morality." Like the scientist doing normal science, he operates within the present paradigm. He finds contradictions in held principles, or contradictions between principle and application of principle; he acts to eliminate suffering or injustice (as justice is understood under the prevailing paradigm). He makes those demands which the minority group he represents wants *now*.¹⁴ And this is necessary so that the prin-

¹⁴ See Walzer's remark in (14): "I should think the immediate goals of the activists must be set by the general consciousness of the oppressed group rather than by their own ideology. The effects can only be judged by those who will feel them. 'Helping' someone usually means doing something for him that he regards or seems likely to regard (*given his present state of mind*) as helpful" (my italics). The women's revolution never would have come about if its "activists" had followed this advice. The fact that these remarks have only to do with reform is also evident in the title of the article: "The Obligations of Oppressed Minorities." I think one of Nietzsche's major contributions to the understanding of change lies in his insight that change need not take place only to relieve oppression. In fact, the claim that a change is necessary to relieve oppression is very often merely a rationalization to explain and justify the natural and creative drive which is essential to human beings. The people see themselves oppressed when their consciousness is raised, i.e., when they begin to look at things from the perspective of the budding new paradigm.

ciples of his paradigm are consistent and so that practice follows principle. Reform essentially involves the *preservation* of values.

The behavior of the moral reformer *seems* to be explicable under the traditional view on morality—after all, he is doing “normal morality.” But because the behavior of the moral revolutionary is not explicable under the traditional view, all moral change is seen as reform. This may explain why so many contemporary Anglo-American philosophers find virtue in the reformer but not in the revolutionary.

Of course, the moral revolutionary may sometimes *feel* he wants to relieve suffering and injustice. But it is creation, and not the relief of suffering and injustice, which must serve as his foundation. And there are reasons for this.

Workers in the women’s revolution might have *felt* that injustice was being done, but according to the notion of justice within their paradigm, it was not. They may have *felt* that women were suffering under a sexist society, but the vast majority of nineteenth-century women *did not feel* they were suffering from sexism. It’s difficult to make a case that one is struggling to relieve suffering when the “sufferers” themselves deny the suffering.

It is of the reformer that we might say,

Either his reforms will be acceptable to the people, or they will not: if they are acceptable, the people have in principle the power to implement them, and it will be a question not of overthrowing the system but of making it function; if they are not, he has no business to impose them ([1] p. 98).

The revolutionary will not (generally, cannot) impose his demands. But he ceases to be a revolutionary if he makes only those demands which are acceptable to the people at the time. *That* is not a way to creation of values, to creation of a new human being.

I have spoken of “normal morality” and “moral revolution.” But the condition which is normal to human life is not a state of stasis but a state of revolution. Stasis is less painful, more easy to rationalize, more *sure*, more safe. It encourages us to believe we can rest, because we have the truth. But if we think in terms of Nietzschean epistemology, or in terms of Kuhnian paradigms, we see that in science and morality, it is a continued state of revolution which expresses our humanity best. Nietzsche says, in *Zarathustra*,

And life itself confided this secret to me: "Behold," it said, "I am that which must always overcome itself. Indeed, you call it a will to procreate or a drive to an end, to something higher, farther, more manifold: but all this is one. . . . whatever I create and however much I love it—soon I must oppose it and my love . . ." ([9d] II 12).

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 - c. *On the Genealogy of Morals*, W. Kaufmann, ed., Vintage Books, New York (1969).
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NIETZSCHE, KANT, AND EXISTENTIALISM

FREDERICK A. OLAFSON

The true significance of Nietzsche's contribution to moral philosophy can be understood only in the context of his general theory of truth and its special application to the area of values.¹ In spite of a great many extreme statements that make it sound as though he had no use for truth in any form, the real thrust of Nietzsche's argument is against dualistic or "copy" theories of truth. In particular, he rejects the notion of "things in themselves," and with it the view that truth must consist in a relation of correspondence to the latter. But if our ideas and beliefs are not to be described as reflections of a self-subsistent order of things, then (he argues) they must be thought of as products of our own devising which we, in some sense, impose upon our experience of the world. All of our intellectual apparatus must be in the nature of a construction or interpretation by which we actively organize and dominate the world in a certain way. Even the law of contradiction, Nietzsche argues, represents a condition that is set by us and not an ontological truth that is read off from the nature of things. Nietzsche's term for this general view of the conceptualizing function is "perspectivism," and it clearly has many points of affinity with the pragmatism of William James and others. Like the pragmatists, Nietzsche believes that all of our knowledge and our modes of conceptualizing experience involve an evaluative component and represent a decision to construe the world in a certain way. The "will to power" is simply Nietzsche's shorthand label for the aggressive character of the relationship of human subjectivity to the world that it subjects to its categories.

At the same time as he reinterprets the general notion of

From *Principles and Persons: A Philosophical Interpretation of Existentialism* (The Johns Hopkins Press: Baltimore, Md. 1967). Reprinted by permission of the publishers with minimal revisions by the author.

¹ The interpretation of morality and of moral phenomena generally may be said to be the theme of almost all Nietzsche's works, although *The Genealogy of Morals* and *Beyond Good and Evil* are perhaps most directly concerned with these topics. Of even greater interest, however, especially from the "meta-ethical" standpoint of this study, are the writings of Nietzsche's last period, some of which are known under the title of *The Will to Power* but which have been arranged and edited with great skill by K. Schlechta in the third volume of his edition of Nietzsche's *Werke* (München: C. Hanser, 1956).

truth in this pragmatic spirit, Nietzsche also recognizes a fundamental distinction between establishing the truth of a factual statement and the volitional acts by which an end, i.e., a value, is freely posited. The difference is that verification involves a certain passivity in relation to what is external to the self, although Nietzsche's general doctrine of mind requires that even here *some* element of activity be present. By contrast, evaluation is a purer expression of the human power of legislating for oneself, of assigning values and meanings without any dependence on, or need for, a supporting value-quality in the things evaluated themselves. On this distinction rests what may fairly be termed the central thesis of Nietzsche's ethical theory. This is that any conception of evaluation that makes it an apprehension of truth in the sense of a verification of some state of affairs, whether empirical or metaphysical, distorts its nature and ultimately denatures the evaluative function itself. By this emphatic repudiation of all conceptions of evaluation as knowing, and by his insistence that evaluation must be understood as a volitional act, Nietzsche aligns himself with the voluntaristic tradition against all forms of intellectualism and naturalism.

Throughout his works, but especially in the writings that were to be edited posthumously under the title of *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche repeatedly drives home this point. He declares that philosophers, i.e., moralists, must be legislators, but first the confusion of the moralist with the scientist must be dispelled. "As though values were inherent in things so that all one had to do were to keep a grip on them!" In another passage, Nietzsche lays down as his first principle that "there are no moral phenomena but only a moral interpretation of these phenomena." Evaluative judgments are "active" and the "value of the world lies in our interpretation." To transform this interpretative, evaluative function into "predicates of being," "to demand that our human interpretations and values should be general, and perhaps even constitutive values, belongs among the hereditary idiocies of human pride." As a form of practical shorthand, it may be admissible to treat values as properties; but we must not forget that they are properties of a kind to which the concept of knowledge does not apply. The properties to which it does apply are quantitative in character, and value properties are merely the pseudo-objective coloring-off on the world of evaluative judgments which thus penetrate the sensuous quality of things instead of being determined by it.

A certain ambivalence runs through Nietzsche's account of the human tendency to substantialize value. In some passages he declares that "to impress the character of being upon becoming is the highest form of the will to power." If the stability of being is an illusion, particularly in the case of "value properties," then a sovereign indifference to the falsity involved in such substantialization might indeed be expressed by one who had seen through the illusion and still continued to reify values; and this kind of indifference is something that Nietzsche greatly admired. But when this ontologizing of value is not the expression of a self-conscious will to impose one's evaluation upon the world at large, as of course it is not in the great majority of cases, Nietzsche condemns it in the severest terms. It indicates a weakness of the will, an incapacity for autonomous ethical creativity which typically passes over into nihilistic despair when its support is removed. "The belief that the world as it should be really exists is a belief of those unproductive persons who do not wish to create a world as it should be . . . The will to truth is the incapacity of the will to create." Here Nietzsche is breaking new ground. Intellectualism is no longer just a philosophical error, but a symptom of a moral tendency in human beings that is positively bad. A certain conception of evaluation is thus intimately connected with a style of life, and it is not surprising that Nietzsche also believed that his own conception of evaluation could, by itself, yield a positive ethic.

It has often been pointed out that the positive ideal toward which humanity is to reorient itself is, in fact, only very obscurely delineated by Nietzsche. This is true, and it might be added that such specificity as his proposals acquire through the imagery of ruthlessness and violence with which they are associated distorts his meaning in a way that has proved immensely prejudicial to a correct understanding and balanced appraisal of his views. At the same time, this very vagueness may be taken as a sign that Nietzsche is at least as interested in changing our conception of ourselves as evaluative beings as he is in proposing the substance of a new moral ideal. The "transvaluation of values" is not, in the first instance, a repudiation of old values in favor of new ones. Instead, it is a new conception of evaluation as a human activity, and a resultant transformation of the style and temper of that activity itself. To use the current jargon of analytical philosophy, Nietzsche is the prophet not so much of an ethical revolution as of a "meta-ethical" revolution. As was noted

above, he certainly believed that once human beings fully comprehended their own capacity for being a law unto themselves, an immense change would be effected in every area of human life. He also projected a vision of what that change would consist in, which, in spite of its indistinctness, most people find repellent. But the crux of his ethical thought is the question as to the nature of evaluation itself, and it is his answer to that question which places him squarely in the voluntaristic tradition.

If Nietzsche is thus in fundamental agreement with Kant in situating the ethical in the province of will and in denying that the theoretical intellect can legislate for human action, he breaks sharply with Kant in his conception of that will itself, and he has a quite different view of how the will must realize its own distinctive virtue. He rejects the view that an action is right only if it would be right for every other human being in the same situation, and he repudiates the cognate conception of morality which makes its chief task the harmonious adjustment to one another of a community of wills. There is, of course, a clear connection between the Kantian view that universalizability is a necessary and sufficient condition of an action's rightness and the view that morality is at bottom a guidance of conduct by principles that *everyone* could accept. For this ethic of reciprocity, Nietzsche reserves his most scornful epithets, and the violence of his denunciation of the principle of equivalence implicit in such a conception of morality has often blocked an understanding of the logical considerations on which Nietzsche bases his attack on universalizability. Consistently with his pragmatic theory of concept-formation, Nietzsche argues that the concept of the "same action" on which the whole idea of universalizability and reciprocity rests presupposes the adoption by the person who uses it of certain criteria of sameness. It is, in fact, we who create these equivalences of one action with another, and Nietzsche's point is that this assimilation itself expresses a moral *parti pris*. Such a classification of actions as equivalent cannot therefore be treated (as it is by Kant) as the deliverance of a rational will that brings cases under general rules without thereby "pre-evaluating" them. Instead, it is itself a primary, and perhaps decisive, evaluative act.

More important, however, is Nietzsche's belief that a truly conceived morality is concerned not with the compatibility of individual wills with one another, but with the creation and realization of ideals. These ideals are comprehensive styles

of life that express a preference that is not justifiable by any standard except itself. They are pre-eminently the expression of individual choice and preference, and they make no claim to universal validity or acceptance. It is characteristic of such ideals that they make demands on those who espouse them to which others are not subject; and the value of what one does at the behest of such an ideal resides, in great part, in this very uniqueness. This claim is no longer felt to be a command for others—a "*du sollst*"—but an "*ich will*," and ultimately, an "*ich bin*"—an expression of what the individual chooses and of what (by virtue of his choices) he is. Nietzsche's great example of this free morality of self-creation was the Greeks. Christianity represented in his eyes precisely the opposite: a morality that combines a lack of inner freedom with a regulation of life by universal principles and the tame virtues of which the mass of people is capable.

This insistence on the central role of ideals in the moral life is perhaps Nietzsche's main contribution to ethical theory. With it is associated a new conception of autonomy which, as he says, consists in not being "locked into a system of purposes" and in being one's own moral lawgiver. The will realizes itself, not by laying down laws that are to be valid for everyone, but in projecting a unique ideal of the self and in living by that ideal. It is a freedom to "re-evaluate all values" in the light of one's own ideal. The autonomy of a will that can act only when the maxim of its action has been shown to enjoy a universal validity is simply a new form of the old subjection to an external master, although that master is no longer God but one's fellow men or "society." Whether "social morality" in the sense of a universal code based on the idea of reciprocity could have a subordinate place, even within an ethic that recognizes the distinctive character of ideals, is not absolutely clear. What Nietzsche often seems to be saying is not that ideals will replace the discipline of social morality, but that the relationship between the two must be understood in a new way. Instead of social morality determining what ideals are to be admissible, the ideals of a controlling elite must give direction to a society as a whole and, in cases of conflict, take precedence over the demands of the "universal" moral code. Nietzsche always assumes that this distinction between the morality of social rules and the morality of ideals will be duplicated by a distinction between the passive majority and a certain ruling elite; and much of the unpopularity of his views has its basis in the images of

harsh and tyrannical domination that he associated with this notion of a class that creates and lives out an ideal. In practice, of course, even an elite needs rules of reciprocity quite as much as society as a whole does, so it may be reasonable to view "ideals" and "social rules" as two aspects of morality, neither of which can claim to be the whole of morality by itself. In any case, what is genuinely important in Nietzsche's discussion of ideals and rules is not any simplistic assumption that some class or individual can dispense entirely with the one or the other, but rather his reversal of the more usual view that only those ideals are valid that are compatible with the rules of universal morality. Moral obligations to others will henceforth have to be authenticated by reference to ideals, and not the other way around; and this exactly formulates the most serious problem that the existentialists who follow Nietzsche were to encounter.

In support of the interpretation proposed above, it may be noted that there is much in Nietzsche's own writings that is hard to reconcile with the customary view that he is an extreme individualist in ethical theory. To begin with, the ideals he speaks of are the ideals of some group that is smaller than the whole society, but certainly cannot be confined to a single individual. Nietzsche, in fact, often speaks with contempt of moral individualism, and insists strongly on the importance of tradition and continuity and a sense of responsibility for the future of man as a whole.² Indeed, he often seems to be arguing that the harsh domination of society as a whole by the ideal of an elite is in the interest of the human race as a whole, whatever hardships it may entail. It might also be said that in his view, such an elite would be legislating for all men, since it is insisting that its style of life shall be the one that dominates and shapes society as a whole (and for its ultimate good) even though it is not one in which the mass of human beings can directly participate. It is interesting to note that when the existentialists speak of choosing for all men in choosing for one's self, they often use the language of Kant to whom they in fact appeal, but they have not always made clear that they understand how sharply this conception of universalizability breaks with the views of Nietzsche. To choose for all men in the Kantian sense is to choose that which every rational being must recognize to be right; but to choose for all men in the Nietzschean sense is to choose

² Sharply critical comments on "individualism" can be found throughout the *Nachlass*. (See for example, *ibid.*, pp. 474, 605, 907.)

for one's self and one's class and thereby to create a world in which others must live, willy-nilly.

To trace the line of descent of contemporary existentialism to *both* Kant and Nietzsche is thus to expose a centrally important ambivalence in its ethical theory. With respect to the independence of the moral from the theoretical intellect and the necessity for treating moral legislation as an autonomous function of the will, both Kant and Nietzsche are in agreement; and this dual ancestry poses no problem for present-day existentialists for whom a rejection of all forms of "natural" morality has become an agreed upon starting point. But when Kant and Nietzsche separate, as they do, on the issue of the internal controls to which the moral will is subject, a serious problem is posed for anyone who stands in the same voluntaristic tradition as they. *Either* he must hold with Kant that there is a single test—or set of tests—that every rational being must apply to proposals for action and by the outcome of which he must be guided; *or* he must, with Nietzsche, abandon the notion of strict universalizability as a criterion of rightness and adopt the view that standards and ideals of conduct are ineradicably plural, and universal only in the sense that the ideals of the dominant class are imposed upon everyone and "willed for them."

Now it is often supposed that contemporary existentialists have unambiguously opted for Nietzsche and against Kant on this issue.³ This is, in fact, not the case. They have, it is true, often criticized the morality of general rules, but they have done so not on the grounds that the ordering of conduct by reference to such rules is incompatible with moral autonomy, but on the more restricted grounds that such rules too often serve as substitutes for the decisions we are unwilling to face. The existentialists often sound like Nietzsche, but they also often sound like Kant, so it is hardly surprising if they are charged with not having a clear doctrine of universality as an element in moral judgment. I cannot consider these existentialist views here or what development they would permit. It is enough to point out that to attribute an extreme antinomian particularism to the ethical theory of the existentialists is not justified. Critics who have done so have correctly located the fundamental issue for that theory, but as is so often the case, they have too quickly identified

³ See for example, E. Gellner, "Ethics and Logic," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, N. S. Vol. 55 (1955), p. 157. No evidence is presented from any existentialist writings in behalf of this interpretation.

existentialism with an extreme and one-sided position on that issue.

One final observation: in spite of all the obvious affinities between Nietzsche and existentialism, it would not be difficult to make a case for treating Nietzsche as a representative of a quite different type of ethical theory. He was, after all, a severe critic of all attempts to isolate "morality" from its biological and psychological matrix; and he insisted that moral judgment must be understood as an expression of underlying biological forces, rather than as an apprehension of a self-subsistent realm of moral truths. At times he went so far as to see in moral activity nothing more than a kind of epiphenomenal symptom of the vital self-assertiveness of a given individual or society. From this position, it would seem to be just a step to the view that moral judgments are translatable into statements that describe the direction and intensity of whatever biological drives these judgments serve to express. Nietzsche never quite took this step, however, and it seems clear that he did not think that moral judgments are intended or understood by those who make them, as descriptions of their own biological or psychological state, even though they might profitably be so viewed by the psychologist of morals. In practice, if not in theory, Nietzsche does treat the moral life as a distinctive human function that cannot be reduced to a merely symptomatic expression of vital drives. Indeed, it is tempting to see in Nietzsche's "biologism" no more than an addendum, inspired by the Darwinism of his day, to his main account of morals.⁴ Nevertheless, this naturalistic tinge to his ethical thought does set him apart from the existentialists who, in constructing their even more radical doctrine of autonomy, were to reject all of Nietzsche's dubious biological metaphors.

⁴ Heidegger's rejection of the "biologism" imputed to Nietzsche is stated in his *Nietzsche*, Vol. 1, pp. 590-616.

NIETZSCHE, NIHILISM, AND MORALITY

ROBERT C. SOLOMON

1.

Friedrich Nietzsche is commonly referred to as a "nihilist" on the grounds that he rejects "morality." Yet Nietzsche does argue for a specific "morality," based upon what he calls the "will to power," with the *Übermensch* as its ideal and the eternal recurrence as its criterion. If Nietzsche is a nihilist, and if he does deny the possibility of rational justification of any set of values, then it would seem that his own "philosophy of power" cannot be justified rationally. But if Nietzsche believes his ethics of power to be justifiable, he cannot consistently be a nihilist.

One might attempt to resolve the apparent inconsistency by denying the central role of either nihilism or the will to power in Nietzsche's philosophy. For example, one might argue that Nietzsche is not a nihilist but only the diagnostician of the nihilism inherent in the "other-worldly" values of his contemporaries. In the early notes of *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche does so refer to nihilism as the problem of his age, as a problem consequent of decadence and the collapse of Christian morality. So construed, nihilism is not a doctrine which Nietzsche endorses but a symptom which he attacks. But "nihilism" has a broader and more important meaning. Nihilism is not only the collapse of traditional values, it is the *demand* for freedom from imposed values. Of course, these motives often appear together—the loss of foundation and faith in traditional values is the ground for the demand for freedom from their now questionable authority. When Zarathustra urges, "what is now falling, one should also push," he is not giving a diagnosis but a prescription, in the name of freedom, for moral euthanasia. This demand for freedom from imposed values is nihilism in a vital sense, and in this sense, Nietzsche is undeniably a nihilist.

Alternatively, one might deny the will to power its central

The main problems of this essay have grown from years of discussions with Frithjof Bergmann. I am indebted to Ed Allaire for his criticisms of the present version. This article was written especially for this volume.

role in Nietzsche's philosophy, perhaps even as a consequence of his nihilism. In *Beyond Good and Evil* (22), Nietzsche taunts a critic, "Granted that this also is only interpretation—and you will be eager enough to make this objection?—well so much the better." Accordingly, one might suggest that the doctrine of the will to power is itself "only interpretation." Moreover, one can point out that the phrase "will to power" arrives rather late in Nietzsche's thought and that its occurrence is confined chiefly to his unpublished notes. But like those interpretations which unwisely limit "Nietzsche's nihilism" to his explicit use of the word "nihilism," this argument misleadingly restricts his conception of the will to power to his explicit use of the phrase "will to power." But the concepts of strength and weakness, health and "overcoming" occupy key positions in Nietzsche's thought from his very first works until *Zarathustra*, where the will to power finally becomes the definiendum of every morality ("A tablet of the goal hangs over every people. Behold, it is the tablet of their overcomings; behold it is the voice of their Will to Power" [Z I 15]). In *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Genealogy of Morals*, the values of strength and weakness are basic to the conceptions of master and slave morality. In *Twilight of the Idols* and *The Antichrist*, the themes of decadence and health are dominant even where the phrase "will to power" does not occur. And surely not to be ignored is Nietzsche's own insistence that the will to power is key to his "revaluation of values," the theme which he took to be the central goal of his entire work.

The themes of nihilism and the will to power occupy approximately the same periods and proportions of Nietzsche's work, and they function together as the key poles of Nietzsche's thought. Nihilism is the problem to which the will to power is the answer. But nihilism, so conceived, is not just the nihilism Nietzsche finds: it is his own insistence upon freedom from imposed values, "ideals," and "morality." Like Albert Camus in this century, Nietzsche wants to *begin* with a temperament of the age and derive a new set of values from it. But where Camus is to make the acceptance of nihilism ("the absurd") this very set of values ("keeping the absurd alive"), Nietzsche uses his nihilism as a foundation for the acceptance of a very different set of values, based upon the will to power.

2.

The apparent inconsistency in Nietzsche's philosophy is largely due to his often intentional wordplay with key notions, notably "nihilism" and "morality," and also "foundation" and "reason." We may distinguish, for a start, the following interrelated conceptions of nihilism:

(1) The collapse of values. ["Nihilism stands at the door . . ." (WP 1).¹ "What does nihilism mean? That the highest values devalue themselves" (WP 2).] References to "collapse," "decline," "decadence," and "degeneration" abound in Nietzsche's writings. Yet this diagnosis of "collapse" appears in many very different accusations: that values are inconsistent, unrealized, no longer taken seriously, without foundation. Regarding the last, we shall see that the notion of "foundation" also admits of several radically different interpretations, and so values can rest upon, or fail to rest upon, very different kinds of "foundations" or justifications.

(2) The philosophical diagnosis of the collapse of values. ["The philosopher as the physician of his culture"; "the vivisectionist of the values of the times"; "nihilism represents a pathological transition stage" (WP 13)] ["nihilism is the recognition of the long *waste* of strength . . ." (WP 12).] In this sense, nihilism is the recognition of the phenomenon of nihilism (1). One might be a nihilist (1) without such recognition. [E.g., "Pessimism is a preliminary form of nihilism" (WP 9). "Our pessimism: the world does not have the values we thought it had" (WP 32).] To be a nihilist (1) is to be a product—a victim—of nihilism. To be a nihilist (2) is to be the diagnostician—the physician—of nihilism (1). In Nietzsche's case, it is clear that the patient is his own doctor, and that he is a nihilist in both senses, ". . . the necessity of doctors and nurses who are themselves sick" (GM III 15).

(3) The collapse of a particular set of values—"morality." ["The nihilistic consequence (the belief in valuelessness) as a consequence of moral valuation: everything egoistic has come to disgust us" (WP 8).] [". . . it is in one particular interpretation, the Christian-moral one, that nihilism is rooted" (WP 1).] It is debatable whether this should be called a different *sense* from the first conception of nihilism

¹ All translations by Walter Kaufmann.

rather than simply its paradigm or even defining instance. If one takes "morality" to mean "the highest values," then the two would be equivalent. But "morality" also admits of manifold conceptions, and if one takes "morality" in the Judeo-Christian sense, as a specific set of principles within a determinate historical tradition, then there will be important qualifications in any discussion of the scope of Nietzsche's nihilism.

(4) The diagnosis of the collapse of "morality." ["Skepticism regarding morality is what is decisive" (WP 3).] ["A Critique of Christian morality is still lacking" (WP 4).] (4) is to (3) as (2) is to (1).

(5) The discovery of a lack of foundations or justifications for a particular set of values or a type of value. ["The aim is lacking: 'Why?' finds no answer" (WP 2).] (5) might be a special case of (2) and (4). It is worthy of separate mention, however, in order to lay the foundation for a crucial point—that Nietzsche is not simply concerned with a single set of values or a single morality, no matter how focused his attack on Judeo-Christian bourgeois morality may become. He is always interested in foundations, and it is the collapse not just of the foundations of Christian morality, but of all foundations of a certain type (the "other-worldly"), which Nietzsche diagnoses. It is important that such diagnosis is not confined to *moral* foundations. From the aphoristic works (particularly *Gay Science*) till the late notes, moral nihilism is grounded in an epistemological nihilism. ["The most extreme form of nihilism . . . there is no true world" (WP 15).]

(6) Cosmic purposelessness. ["the eternal recurrence; the extreme form of nihilism" (WP 55).] ["The whole of history is the refutation by experiment of the principle of the so-called 'moral world order!'" (EH).]

(7) A particular moral attitude. ["life is no good" (Twilight "The Problem of Socrates" 1).] A "hostility against life," a "nay-saying" appeal to the "other-worldly." Nietzsche's starting point, as he often states it, is "life." By this, he means to insist—in his epistemology as well as his moral philosophy—that the justification of any value or principle must account for the *function* of that value or principle in *this* life, without appeal to what is "ideal," "divine," or "rational." It is in this sense that nihilism characterizes a type of value, rather than a collapse of values and their justification. Nihilism is a "negation of life" (A 7), a symptom of decline:

It is my contention that all the supreme values of mankind *lack* this will (for *power*)—that the values which are symptomatic of decline, *nihilistic* values, are lording it under the holiest names (A 6).

In this sense of "nihilism," Nietzsche is not a nihilist; rather he is even an *anti*-nihilist. But this is not to say that Nietzsche is contradicting himself, nor is it to say that this sense of "nihilism" is unrelated to the others. Superficially, it might appear that Nietzsche is using "nihilism" to refer both to a set of values and to the rejection of that set of values. But, in Nietzsche's analysis, the former is the cause of the latter. Nihilism, like reason in Hegel's dialectic, evolves through varied stages of development and expression. In Nietzsche's philosophy, nihilism is first a moral attitude, then an attitude that turns on itself and "devaluates its own values," and then, finally, attains that form of self-recognition which is the end (in both senses) of Hegel's dialectic. [*"The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values— . . . a movement that in some future will take the place of this perfect nihilism—but presupposes it, logically and psychologically, and certainly can come only after and out of it"* (WP Preface).]

In each of the past seven senses, nihilism is a phenomenon to be analyzed. But now, the point is to embrace this recognition and this phenomenon, to move from patient and diagnostician to one who makes the disease the very basis of his health ("That which does not destroy me makes me stronger" *Twilight* I 8). And so, Nietzsche moves from the diagnostician to the nihilist proper, the one who endorses, not just recognizes, the phenomenon of nihilism (1-7):

Main proposition. How *complete nihilism* is the necessary consequence of the ideals entertained hitherto. Incomplete nihilism; its forms: we live in the midst of it (WP 28).

That is precisely how we find the pathos that impels us to seek new values (WP 32).

What is falling, one should also push (Z III 12).

(8) The demand for freedom from imposed values. Perhaps the best characterization of this embracing spirit of nihilism comes from Ivan Turgenev, who popularized the term "nihilist" for nineteenth-century Europe in his novel *Fathers and Sons*. There, young Arkady describes his friend Bazarov as a "nihilist," as

a man who does not bow down before any authority, who does not take any principle on faith, whatever reverence that principle is enshrined in.

As it stands, unfortunately, this characterization captures the spirit of the entire Enlightenment from Descartes to Kant as well as the nihilism of Bazarov, Dostoevsky, and Nietzsche. But Nietzsche, unlike Descartes or Kant, will turn to neither God nor reason in his search for values, and so his rejection of "authority" is considerably more radical than theirs. It is in his war against imposed values that Nietzsche conducts his "campaign against morality," urges us to "become who we are" and pursue "our own virtue." The often misunderstood attack on reason and the celebration of the instincts and passions is first of all a reaction against the "tyranny" of reason and the authority of church, morality, and "the herd" in their disdain for "the individual" and the "exceptional human being."

We ourselves, we free spirits, are nothing less than a "revaluation of all values," an *incarnate* declaration of war . . . (A 13).

(9) The demand for freedom from certain values or moral commands, namely, "other-worldly values." [". . . my brothers, remain faithful to the earth! (Z I 3).] The attack on other-worldly values (of which Christian morality is the paradigm) and the attack on imposed values (8) are of a piece, but not equivalent. One of Nietzsche's battles is against the other-worldly foundations and goals of Christianity; but another is against all universal and social morality, the morality of the herd, all morality which places group interests above and opposed to the individual. Ultimately, Christian morality and herd morality are attacked as one, as it is herd morality which is responsible for Christian morality. But the two are distinct. Socrates, for example, is indicted by Nietzsche for his appeal to the other-worldly, but he is admired for his individuality. The "last man" is "contemptible" for his herd spirit, but he is not guilty of being "other-worldly." It is important to remind ourselves that Nietzsche never simply attacks an isolated moral principle: he always attacks a system of morality, a connected set of principles, values, foundations, and motivations. And so, while Nietzsche is clearly a nihilist in the sense that he rejects a great many (but surely not all) principles of Christian morality, to so limit Nietzsche's nihilism is to trivialize the depth of his philosophy.

(10) The demand for freedom from all moral rules, principles, and "ideals." On one interpretation, this form of nihilism is surely too extreme for Nietzsche, who continuously insists that he seeks "new values": (BGE 211; WP

Preface 4, 32). But there is an aspect of Nietzsche's attack on Christian and herd morality and his "revaluation" which is often overlooked. What he seeks is not another set of rules, an alternative set of imperatives to the Ten Commandments. Nietzsche's nihilism is ". . . let me emphasize this once more—*moraline-free*" (A 6). ["My philosophy aims at an ordering of rank; not at an individualistic morality" (WP 287).] This is the sense in which Nietzsche attacks all "ideals" as well as "the improvers of mankind." To say what man *ought* to be, Nietzsche tells us, is "no small madness, no modest kind of immodesty." This will seem strange only so long as we insist that value consists of principles of right and wrong action (of "good and evil"), and ignore the value of "good character" and "style." ["Giving style to one's character . . . a rare and noble art . . ." GS.] There is a moral sense in which a good character is one who has performed good actions and abstained from bad actions, but that is not the sense which Nietzsche has in mind. He is concerned, in terms taken from Greek ethics, with *virtue* and *excellence*, individual style and character that is not reducible to the actions a man has and has not performed or will perform. The man of character might perform any action—even cruel action—without detracting from his character. This shift from rules to style has opened up Nietzsche to many serious misinterpretations, for example, that he favors cruelty and evil. But his point is not to argue *immorality*, but to seriously go "beyond good and evil" to a conception of good (and bad) which pays less attention to rules and principles and more to individual virtue and excellence of character.

Is Nietzsche a nihilist? In the sense that he is the diagnostician of the "devaluation of the highest values" and the corruption of the foundations of "morality," in the sense that he denies any moral order or purpose to the universe, in the sense that he demands freedom from imposed values, in particular the authoritarian values of the "other-worldly," and in the sense that he rejects moral principles and rules in favor of personal style and character—yes. But Nietzsche is not a nihilist in the sense that he attacks all values, or in the sense that he endorses principles or positions simply because they are anti-moral, or in the sense that he adopts those values which he calls "nihilistic," i.e., those "hostile to life." To the contrary, Nietzsche ridicules those who would deny all values, he rejects those who would adopt an anti-morality, which,

after all, retains the foundations of morality but only perverts its substance, and he attacks values—including anti-moral values—which are “against life.”

Given this Hegelian movement between different yet related senses of “nihilism,” we must be very careful in any discussion of “Nietzsche’s nihilism” and doubly careful in any attempt to provide a single answer to the question whether Nietzsche is a nihilist or not. With regard to his nihilistic attack upon morality, we must not only keep in mind these various senses of “nihilism,” we must also keep in mind an equally complicated dialectic regarding the notion of “morality.”

3.

The centrality of Nietzsche’s attack on morality and his own “immorality” is as much a matter of reputation as intention. It is true that he announces, in *Dawn* (1881) “the beginning of my campaign against morality,” that he titles one of his later works “Beyond Good and Evil,” and that he frequently attacks morality as “immoral,” “detrimental to life,” “the work of error,” “a disease” (WP 266, 273). But his central concern is not attack, but *creation* “of new values.”

[Philosophy] demands that one create values. . . . the real philosophers are commanders and legislators. They say, “it shall be thus!” . . . Their instrument, their hammer (BGE 211).

Nietzsche’s nihilism is but a precondition, a clearing of the ground to make room for a new *conception* of values.

The concept of “value” is the key to Nietzsche’s philosophy. It is the *value of value* that he seeks to understand, the *revaluation of values* that he undertakes as the goal of his philosophizing, the *transvaluation of values* that he seeks to unmask as the origin of “morality,” the nihilistic *devaluation of the highest values* that he diagnoses as the consequence of Christian morality. “Value” is the general conception of which “morality” is a special instance. A value is any object of desire, any “inclination,” motivation, drive, attraction, whether instinctual or acquired, latent or aroused, whether “end-in-itself” or means to another end. “Value” is in the domain of psychology, and so Nietzsche prides himself as being “a philosopher who is also a psychologist.” A value is the property of a person; it is what Kant called a “subjective maxim,” except that the notion of “maxim” already leans

toward an interpretation of a value as a principle, albeit a personal rather than a universal principle. And Nietzsche is interested in other values than principled values, for example, aesthetic and spiritual values, and personal character, which need not result in any specific forms of action. There is much more that is good than a "good will." A good will is good only, contrary to Kant, with serious qualification. For example, one wants to know *whose* will it is: what is *he* worth?

A *moral* value, however, is more than psychological, more than a "subjective maxim." A moral value is an action-guiding principle (just as likely a rule for abstention and resistance as a rule for doing, however; cf. Bertrand Russell [1929]: "In all ages and nations positive morality has consisted almost wholly of prohibition of various classes of actions, with the addition of a small number of commands to perform certain other actions"). It is a principle that is *universal*, never the property of an individual; and it is justifiable on the basis of a *rational* foundation. Its relation to the individual, again in Kant's terms, is *categorical*, not conditional on the interests and character of the individual: "reason commands, not advises."

But "morality" allows many different interpretations, and so there are many senses in which one might say that Nietzsche attacks morality in order to leave room for the creation of new values. To make matters far more complicated, "morality," unlike "nihilism," is an everyday concept that had been distorted and played with for several philosophical generations before Nietzsche had his opportunity to do so. Kant, for example, had analyzed a trimmed, perhaps truncated, concept of morality (*Moralität*) which effectively ruled out all psychological influences (of "interest" and "inclination") from considerations of "moral worth." Hegel had then attacked Kant and replaced this trimmed notion of "morality" with a far more generous concept (*Sittlichkeit*), which included within the domain of morality not only the universal rules and principles of reason but also the customs and mores of one's society.

Nietzsche employs several conceptions of morality and often plays them against one another. For example, he remarks in a letter to his friend Paul Rée,

She told me herself that she had no morality,—and I thought she had, like myself, a more severe morality than anybody. . . . (1882, translated in Kaufmann, *Viking Portable Nietzsche*, p. 102)

The clash of uses produces curious tensions and oxymorons such as "morality as the work of immorality" (WP 266; cf. WP 308) and contrasts such as "good and bad" as *opposed* to "good and evil." Occasionally, Nietzsche praises or endorses the work of morality, for example, where he speaks of "healthy morality, dominated by the instinct for life" (Twilight "Morality as Anti-Nature"). [Cf. "I understand by 'morality' a system of evaluations that partially coincides with the conditions of a creature's life" (WP 256).] These uses must be clearly distinguished from those conceptions of "morality" which Nietzsche attacks and rejects as "against life."

Of the various conceptions employed by Nietzsche, those which are most important refer to a more or less specific set of moral principles with their roots in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, their current practice in the bourgeoisie that Hesse later describes as "that fat brood of mediocrity," their most sophisticated defense in the moral philosophy of Kant, and their psychological genesis, Nietzsche argues, in feelings of *ressentiment*. But these central conceptions of morality can be reinterpreted more broadly and more narrowly. At their extremes, such interpretations become troublesome. For example, one might extensionally interpret "morality" such that morality becomes a distinct list of specific principles, e.g., "thou shalt not kill!" "don't break promises!" "treat others as you would be treated yourself!" But Nietzsche is never concerned solely with specific principles but always with the system of which they are a part, the foundation which gives them support, and the psychology within which they serve as a function. To reduce Nietzsche's attack on morality to an attack on a specific set of principles is at least a trivialization of his philosophy. Or worse, it is in some instances a falsification, since at least some of Nietzsche's own values are also values in the Judeo-Christian tradition. ["The good four. Honest . . . courageous . . . generous . . . polite . . ." (*Dawn* 556).] At the other extreme, there is a broad conception of "morality" such that it becomes an equivalent to Nietzsche's conception of "value." Any set of values, on this conception, would be a morality. Given this conception of "morality," however, it is simply false that Nietzsche attacks morality, and so one of the central themes of his philosophy, his "campaign against morality," is lost to us.

In a simple-minded way, one might say that Nietzsche defends *values* in general ("one could not live without valuing"), but attacks *moral* values. But there are many senses in which

Nietzsche attacks moral values, for there are many different conceptions of morality that are operative in Nietzsche's work. And the fact that Nietzsche defends values in general is not sufficient to understand why he should believe that some values are of more value than others. To understand Nietzsche's attack and his defense of one set of values—based upon the will to power—we shall have to be far more precise about these various conceptions.

For relative simplicity, I want to restrict the notion of morality to sets of action-guiding principles. There is a sense in which we—and Nietzsche—can speak of moral character (as Aristotle does in his *Ethics*, without reducing moral character to a mere summary of history and propensity for morally right acts) or the morality of art or history. But the focus of Nietzsche's attention is those moral principles which prescribe and proscribe specific actions and types of actions universally, and this sense is sufficient to understand Nietzsche's attack on morality.

Morality may be characterized by virtue of the source of its principles, the justification or sanction for its principles, the form of its principles, the content of its principles, or its relationship to other principles. And morality might be taken to be those principles which are current (as in *Sittlichkeit*) or as any coherent set of principles:

- (1) If morality is characterized by virtue of the source of its principles, moral rules and attitudes would be those that have developed from the Judeo-Christian tradition. Nietzsche's analysis of this development is brilliantly insightful; he augments this superficial historical tradition with a psychological syndrome, such that Judeo-Christian religion and practices become not nearly so important as the *psychology* of the practitioners. Whether it is the tradition or the psychology that is taken as fundamental, this sense of morality refers to those principles which can be traced more or less directly to this genealogy. "Thou shalt not kill" is a moral principle, therefore, because it is one of the Ten Commandments, whether or not the principle has any justification outside its traditional context.
- (2) There is no single sense in which morality can be characterized by virtue of justification or sanctions of its principles. In an obvious sense (2a), morality might be characterized as those principles which have their justification and their sanction in the will of God. This would be related to, but still very different from (1). For example, a recent "God is dead"

movement *within* the Christian church attempts to hold onto the moral tradition of Christianity while giving up its theological supports. Alternatively, there are radical conceptions of Christian faith (e.g., in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling: "The Problem of Abraham"*) such that one might see being a Christian as distinct from (though not necessarily opposed to) acceptance of Judeo-Christian moral traditions. But it is clear that Nietzsche's frequent references to morality as "other-worldly" derive in large measure from the Judeo-Christian conception of a transcendent and divine judge and sanction as well as from Judeo-Christian tradition. "Morality," so conceived, is those principles which are (believed to be) objects of God's will.

(2b) But morality has its other, more earthly sanctions. Most evidently, the authority for justification and sanctions might be society itself, through its social customs and laws. Accordingly, morality might be characterized as those principles which receive their validity through societal acceptance and authority. Thus, "Thou shalt not kill," although it has its origins in a religious tradition, is taken to be a moral principle because it is embodied in the mores and laws of society.

(2c) There is a third source of authority, however, which is not, in any simple way, reducible to the authority of religion or society. That is *reason*. Kant, for example, had attempted to *define* moral principles as principles of practical reason and justify these principles without appeal to societal authority (one source of Hegel's criticism) and without appeal, in one sense, to the authority of God. (This point is a bit touchy; on the one hand, Kant insists that the validity of morality can depend only on reason and cannot appeal to divine promises; on the other hand, he insists that belief in God as omniscient, omnipotent, all-just judge is a "postulate of practical reason," a "necessary presupposition of morality." The logical distinction here between belief in God as part of the justification of morality and as one of its presuppositions is a matter which never ceased to give Kant serious problems.) Ultimately, Kant insists that reason is the final authority (and that God as well as men are subject to its authority). Reason is the *universal* lawgiver and pays no attention to the particular interests and characters of individual men. Morality, so conceived, is those principles which can be defended by reason alone, whether or not they are derivative of a religious tradition, embodied in religious morality or a social order.

(3) I have several times insisted that moral principles are uni-

versal principles, but I have not yet elevated this to a uniquely defining characteristic. In Kant's analysis of "morality," it is the universal *form* of certain principles that makes them moral principles. Moral principles are *categorical* imperatives, universal commands, and the "first formulation" of the categorical imperative demands that one "act such that he would will the maxim of his action as *universal law*." Kant takes this to be a purely *formal* characteristic of such principles, a matter of their common logic rather than any specific content, consequences, or circumstances of application. Accordingly, morality, so conceived, is that set of action-guiding principles which are universal or categorical in form.

(4) So far, I have not even mentioned the specific content of moral principles. I have characterized morality only by appeal to its sources, justifications and sanctions, and forms. But clearly one might wish to argue that the reason that killing is *morally* wrong is not because that proscription happens to be one of the Ten Commandments, not because it is societally unacceptable and illegal or irrational to kill, but because killing itself is immoral. But this characterization is incomplete until we specify by virtue of what killing is immoral. One might insist that the principle proscribing killing is a moral principle simply because it is one of *those* principles. In other words, one might give a straightforwardly *extensional* characterization of morality, such that a moral principle is any principle on a certain list, not a principle of a certain kind. When Nietzsche speaks of "morality," he sometimes means "current morality," those principles which are held to be "moral" principles at that time. But there will quite naturally be dissatisfaction with the suggestion that certain principles are simply *called* "moral," and so one wants to look further for that by virtue of which these principles are called "moral." One might suggest that the content of moral principles is characterized by a social concern, a respect for other persons. This is very different from that earlier characterization (2b) which takes moral principles to be those *authorized* by society. A principle might be authorized by a society which has very little respect for persons, just as principles of respect for persons in general are typically not authorized by a great many societies when they conflict with personal interests and privileges. Thus conceived, morality consists of those principles which, like Kant's "3rd [by one count] formulation" of the categorical imperative, respect persons "always as ends and never merely as means." The interpretation of "respect" and "ends" varies

widely, focusing sometimes upon welfare, sometimes on dignity, sometimes on equality of rights. However conceived, such a characterization falls squarely within the realm of what Nietzsche derogatorily entitled "herd morality." It is concern for others that constitutes morality.

(5) A morality might be conceived as a set of psychologically efficient principles of action. For example, a utilitarian theory of morality takes the essence of a moral principle to be its efficiency in promoting happiness and/or pleasure. Of course, there are serious questions concerning the status of moral principles in such discussions, whether it is the principle itself which is to be defended on utilitarian grounds or rather only the actions which fall under it. But morality so conceived is very different from our previous conceptions in that it need not give rise to universal principles or to the demand for any sanction or justification rather than the facts of one's own welfare. [Compare Bertrand Russell: ". . . the supreme moral rule: act so as to produce harmonious rather than discordant desires" (*Outline of Philosophy*, p. 234).] As such, Nietzsche himself adopts such a "morality," but his basic psychological principle is not the desire for pleasure or happiness but *will to power*. Arguing against utilitarianism and all hedonist ethics, Nietzsche attempts to show that the goal of action is rarely pleasure and that pleasure appears only as an accompaniment of increase in power. [Cf. Aristotle, *N. Ethics*, Bk. X: "pleasure completes the activity . . . as an end which supervenes as the bloom of youth does on those in the flower of their age."]

If morality is conceived as a set of psychologically efficient principles whose ultimate goal ("value") is the will to power, then morality in all previous senses would appear to be "immoral." While Nietzsche does employ this apparent contradiction for its shock value ("the immorality of morality"), he argues extensively that "moral" principles, whether conceived in terms of their historical origins, their justification and sanction, or their logical form, are also expressions of the will to power, even where they explicitly disclaim any desires for power. ["When theologians reach out for *power* through the "conscience" of princes (*or* of peoples) we need never doubt what really happens at bottom; the will to the end, the *nihilistic* will, wants power" (A 10).] Judeo-Christian morality is the *collective* ("herd") exercise of the will to power by the weak. Incapable of satisfying their own desires (for power), they collectively settle for prevention of similar satisfactions in the

stronger. Where the manifestation of the will to power in the powerful is *desire* and *passion*, the will to power in the impotent is *ressentiment* of the powerful. ["One should distinguish well: whoever still wants to gain the consciousness of power will use any means. . . . He, however, who has it has become very choosy and noble in his tastes" (*Dawn* 348).] Accordingly, Nietzsche recharacterizes "herd morality" as "slave morality," for its values are dependent upon a reaction to and *reversal* of ("transvaluation of") the desires of the powerful. The values of the powerful depend upon "Dionysian" frenzy, and so it is necessary to convert this wild and often destructive torrent of passion and desire into an "Apollonian" coherent and "life-enhancing" set of values and virtues. But *morality*, now conceived as the expression of the will to power of the impotent (whatever its nominal formulation and rationalization as "practical reason," "the Will of God," or "the social contract"), tries not to so sublimate and organize the passions but to *deny* them. ["the moralist's mania which demands not the control but the extirpation of the passions. Their conclusion is ever; only the emasculated man is the good man" (A 47).]

Instead of employing the great sources of strength, those impetuous torrents of the soul that are so often dangerous and over-whelming, and economizing them, this most short-sighted and pernicious mode of thought wants to make them dry up (WP 383).

Thus, Nietzsche's attack on morality is not simply a confrontation of one set of values pitted against another. All values, Nietzsche argues, are based upon the will to power, and his objection to morality is not that its values are not aimed at power or that they are aimed at impotent power through *ressentiment*. The objection is that morality hypocritically and secretly aims at power for the impotent by imposing standards of impotence upon the strong. It is the *universalization* of the impotent will to power to cover the strong that Nietzsche rejects. He does not attempt, despite his reputation and his most frequent interpretations, to deny morality. Nietzsche's elitism commits him to the position that there will always be weak persons; his psychology commits him to the position that all values are expressions of the will to power; consequently, he is committed to the position that morality will always be necessary—for the weak. What he insists upon doing is rather to limit the universal claims of morality to leave room for a different kind of expression of the will to power. But neither can

this expression—in art, in philosophy, in saintliness and asceticism—be universalized, for the cardinal principle of Nietzsche's philosophy is that people are different, and so their values, though all expressions of the will to power, must be different as well.

We can already see that Nietzsche's "attack on morality," and thus his "nihilism," must be seriously qualified. He attacks the claims of moral principles to be universal, but he does not deny morality its proper domain. He exposes the hidden motivation of the moralists to be an impotent will to power, but he does not suggest that the impotent could be sensibly commanded to become potent. Nietzsche's "attack on morality," like Kant's defense of morality, might be more accurately reinterpreted as an analysis of morality, its presuppositions, and its proper place.

(6) Underlying all of these characterizations of morality is the idea that moral principles are the *highest* principles. Accordingly, one might characterize morality simply as "the highest principles." But this leads to serious problems when one attempts to justify morality. "Why ought I be moral?" Perhaps because it would be amusing, or gratifying, or because I would benefit from the public display of virtue. [Cf. Camus' Clamence (before his "fall") in *The Fall*.] Or perhaps one ought to be moral because it will make him and/or others happier, or perhaps one should simply try to avoid noxious punishments, legal indictments, public disgrace. But if any of these ends are taken to be justifications of moral action, they themselves would become "higher" in value than the "moral" principles in question, since moral action would become a mere means to their satisfaction. Accordingly, either one gives up the idea that morality can be justified, or one moves to a different characterization of morality. Or, taking this characterization seriously, one might become that sort of relativist who takes *any* coherent system of principles to be *a morality*. While there are philosophers who would hold such a concept of morality, Nietzsche is surely not one of them. Although Nietzsche employs varied conceptions of "morality," he is not a relativist, and he does not believe that any set of values, considered apart from their function in the life of a people, can be a morality. He believes that there is a single psychologically justifiable standard, and that differences in the ways of acting upon that standard are not differences in basic moral principles, but only differences in character. The weak cannot exercise their power in the same ways as the strong. Apparent dif-

ferences in morality are in fact only differences in strength. (7) It might be mentioned, in ending this lengthy list, that there is a final degenerate sense of "moral" which Nietzsche uses not infrequently in his later polemics. "Moral" and "immoral" can function, quite apart from any *conception* of morality, as adjectives of emotional evaluative stress. Without any further argument to fall back upon in an attack, one might desperately or angrily grab onto a "moral" accusation, weight his indictment of an act, principle, or person with the weighty word "immoral." While this non-conception of morality is not of theoretical interest to us here, it is sometimes necessary to the understanding of Nietzsche's harshest attacks.

This is an oppressive list of distinctions. What do they signify? Different meanings? Different senses? Different conceptions? In *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche offers us an insight: "Only that which has no history can be defined" (GM II 13). "Morality" is first of all an extensional concept; it *points* to a list of rules, currently accepted action-guiding principles, a "tablet of virtues" within a specific historical-moral context. These rules and principles are superficially unconnected and perhaps even inconsistent. It is a matter of reflection to find their common threads, perhaps by appeal to a small set of principles which provide the "deep structure" which ties this diversity into a unity. One might point to a common ground or justification. Of course, to show the coherence and common ground of our diverse moral beliefs is not yet to give them a rational justification, but at least it can demonstrate that they are systematic and consistent. But there is no single way to tie diverse moral principles together, any more than there is a single line which can be drawn through any large number of scattered points on a sheet of paper.

In several of his works, Nietzsche instructs us that "there are no moral facts, only moral interpretations." In one sense, however, there are moral facts—the facts of the acceptance of certain principles as moral principles within a given social context (Hegel's *Sittlichkeit*). In this society, even with its inconsistencies and confusions, I can make a moral judgment or decision within particular circumstances for a concrete act. In doing so, I appeal to moral principles which, for the purposes of that judgment or decision, are *given* as fixed criteria. But though I justify the judgment or the decision by appeal to the criteria, that is not yet a justification of the criteria. Moral criteria have their significance in concrete practice, not in

philosophical reflection. This early Hegelian-late Wittgensteinian point, innocent as it seems, is the very base of what Nietzsche diagnoses as European nihilism, and it is what he means when he insists, "there are no moral facts." There are only interpretations of morality: only various ways of tying together the diverse facts of our everyday moral life. Perhaps what they have in common is social concern, perhaps it is their universal scope, perhaps it is their Judeo-Christian heritage, perhaps it is just that these are our highest values. But if these all are true, then which or which combination of these common features is uniquely moral? This question might remain academic, unless one has in mind a "revaluation of all values." Then it becomes incumbent upon him to specify just those features of "morality" which are to be rejected, and upon what grounds.

In other words, the above varied conceptions of morality are not different *meanings* or *senses* of "morality."² They are different interpretations of a familiar set of moral facts—that is, acknowledged moral prejudices—which have no single principle of unity. Though the moral text upon which each of these interpretations is based is one and the same, these various interpretations can be attacked and defended independently of each other. Accordingly, Nietzsche's "attack on morality" is not simply an assault on a set of principles whose significance is given; it is a battle within a series of interpretations of disconnected prejudices, some of which he wants to reject, some of which he wants to continue to accept, all of which he wants to understand on a psychological basis.

4.

Although we singled out types of justification as one basis for interpretation of "morality," it must not be thought that conceptions of morality and theories of justification are separate concerns. For example, Kant's conception of morality as universalizability clearly commits him to a theory of justification such that a moral principle can only be defended by appeal to universal and impersonal criteria. Similarly, the utilitarian's conception of morality as rules of maximum utility

² A current controversy in the now sleepy quarters of "ethical analysis" concerns itself with the *meaning* of "morality." The alternatives generally range between universalizability and social-concern. But if what I have indicated above is correct, "morality" does not have *a* meaning (though it certainly has meaning), and the dispute cannot be settled without appeal to specific goals for which one requires such an analysis.

ties him to a theory of justification such that acceptance of a moral principle (or act, or type of act) must *in fact* maximize utility. For Nietzsche, it is clear that conceptions of morality and theories of justification are inseparable. In spite of his epistemological atomism, Nietzsche is a monist. Moral principles and their foundations are of a single piece, a single system united and based upon the will to power. Kant's conception of morality as universal principles of duty, his theory of practical reason, and his Christianity are a single complex though brilliant "prejudice." Christian morality and its theology are the same.

(Naivete: as if morality could survive when the *God* who sanctions it is missing! The beyond absolutely necessary if faith in morality is to be maintained) (WP 253.)

With this inseparability of conception and justification in mind, we must introduce one further vital distinction which Nietzsche employs as the basis for nearly all his attacks on "morality," and which consequently forms the foundation for his "nihilism." Nietzsche distinguishes two types of "values," that is, two types of systems of values, principles, justifications, and "prejudices" (or simply, motives). The first can be characterized—though misleadingly—as "other-worldly." I say misleadingly because it too graphically appeals to the Christian literally "other-world," while the scope of Nietzsche's attack extends far beyond this. In addition to his attack upon other-worldly concerns as such (i.e., not doing what one wants in this life in order to earn a position in the delights—or at least not in the tortures—of the next one), Nietzsche also attacks appeals to metaphysical conceptions of the "other-worldly" (e.g., the "world of Being" in "The Problem of Socrates" [Twilight]), and these are clearly very different, even if, as Nietzsche proceeds to argue, their motivation is the same (i.e., dissatisfaction with *this* life). Furthermore, Nietzsche attacks under the same rubric all moralities that have universal principles, which appeal to universal reason rather than individual desires and "virtues." The connection between Christian morality, Platonic metaphysics, Kant's practical reason, and "herd morality" is their mutual demand for universal and supra-personal values. But it is misleading to talk as if what Nietzsche hated was simply "the other-worldly." He also hated what was decadent and "nay-saying," and these conceptions are far broader than the specialized metaphysical and theological structures to which they *sometimes* give rise. He hated "herd

morality" and personal weakness, but again, though these might lead to metaphysical and theological constructions, they need not. Nietzsche diagnoses "the other-worldly" only as a symptom, not as the source of "life-negating values." It is "danger to life" and the impersonal that Nietzsche attacks.

One more word against Kant as a *moralist*. A virtue must be *our own* invention, *our* most necessary self-expression and self-defense; any other kind of virtue is merely a danger. Whatever is not a condition of our life *harms* it: a virtue that is prompted solely by a feeling of respect for the concept of "virtue," as Kant would have it, is harmful. "Virtue," "duty," the "good in itself," the good which is impersonal and universally valid—chimeras and expressions of decline, of the final exhaustion of life, of the Chinese phase of Königsberg. The fundamental laws of self-preservation and growth demand the opposite—that everyone invent *his own* virtue, *his own* categorical imperative. A people perishes when it confuses *its* duty with duty in general . . . *anti-nature* as instinct, German decadence as philosophy—that is Kant (A 11).

The contrary of such "other-worldly," "decadent," "impersonal," "herd," and "life-threatening" values is, as suggested so often above, "naturalistic" values, life-affirming, personal virtues. Such values are personal needs, desires, aspirations, and "instincts." The source of such values is individual psychology, depending upon the character and circumstance of the individual. This is not to say that every felt need or desire is personal or life-affirming, however. Nietzsche has an operative but never developed conception of true as opposed to false needs and desires, only the former being "naturalistic," the latter being imposed and learned through the authority and discipline of church, society, and even "reason." The separation of *our own* values and imposed internalized values lies at the very heart of Nietzsche's philosophy, and it is one of its serious failings that it does not provide us with more analysis.

It is the *source* of desires that differentiates naturalistic from "other-worldly" values, which is not to say that naturalistic values cannot be *learned*, only that their "value" must be their gratification of an "inner" need. [Cf. Nietzsche on education: "one should give education to only him who needs it."] But this is tantamount to denying the need for any sanction or justification other than an appeal to the personal function of those needs and desires, in Russell's Hegelian phrase, "harmony of desires." In Nietzsche's individualistic naturalistic

ethics, there can be no *reason* for a value other than "I want x," except that x might be a means to some other goal y (such that "I want y" would be a further reason for wanting x), and that x must be shown to be a *real* need or desire in its function in a whole personality. But this is to say that individualistic naturalistic values do not call for justification, they demand, at most, explanation, a demonstration of their function. That sense of justification that demands appeal to some outside criterion or authority (other than personal needs and desires) is out of place here. This would even include "outside" valuations of psychological states, for example, the "objective" value of happiness or satisfaction. It may be that my artistic aspirations cause me to be unhappy, but the relative worth of those aspirations and that unhappiness is a question of my needs and desires, not a question of appeal to an abstract ideal of "happiness." Similarly, piglike behavior might give me far more satisfaction than Socratic reflection, but the question is one of my personality, not of the "quality" of the respective desires in any universal sense.

Naturalistic values are at their basis universal—that is, they are all based upon the will to power—but they are universal only as a matter of fact and not as a matter of necessity, as would be Kant's moral imperatives. Though the will to power is, according to Nietzsche, universal, *people* are different, and because they are different their "virtues"—their "self-overcomings" in accordance with the will to power—must be different also.

One final point:

Nietzsche's ethics is not, as one finds in Socrates or Kant, a *reflective* ethics. This is due, in part, to the stress on "instinct" rather than "reason," but underlying this stress is the recognition, much like that of Dostoevsky in *Notes from Underground*, of the useless if not harmful or even paralyzing effects of conscious reflection and deliberation. It is Nietzsche's intention to display the proper grounds for value, but not to insist that to act in accordance with such value it is necessary to consciously act for the sake of it. This is why I earlier quipped, against Kant, that there is much that is good besides a good will. For Nietzsche, the demand for deliberate action gives way to the prereflective harmony of good character, and the crucial Kantian distinction between action in conformity with duty and action for the sake of duty becomes irrelevant, for every action, in spite of its apparent "rationale," is but an expression of the will to power. It is not a question of a

good will, but style, and style is, perhaps essentially, practiced but not deliberate, unthinking and not self-conscious.

5.

We are now in a position to resolve our initial paradox. Insofar as Nietzsche's nihilism consists of a diagnosis of a phenomenon developing outside of him—in society, in the values themselves—it has no bearing on the apparent inconsistency between Nietzschean nihilism and the will to power. It is only insofar as Nietzschean nihilism becomes a position Nietzsche himself holds that it apparently clashes with his defense of the will to power. Nietzsche does accept nihilism as a rejection of the ultimate "value of values" and their foundations, but not all values, only *imposed* values. What marks such "other-worldly" values might be their source, but it is ultimately their failure to conform to the personal demands of the individual. In other words, the will to power, far from being inconsistent with Nietzsche's nihilism, is its *criterion*. Nihilism is an attack upon and rejection of "other-worldly" values, but the range of other-worldly values is distinguished by the peculiar expressions they offer of the will to power, through a denial of life and *ressentiment* of power.

With particular regard to "morality," Nietzschean nihilism consists of the attack upon and rejection of all those *conceptions* of morality which do not recognize the will to power and personal needs and desires as primary. These would include all conceptions of morality which find the need to appeal to authority—whether of God, church, society, or reason—a sure *symptom* of neglect of individual "instincts." They would include every conception of morality which finds its source in a historical tradition or in a society or group rather than in personal character. They would include every conception of morality which would insist that its commands be universal, an explicit rejection of the interests of the individual. And Nietzschean nihilism would need to reject as well those naturalistic conceptions which, while correctly beginning by appealing only to individual needs and desires, do not find the will to power as the fundamental drive, but rather pleasure or happiness. But the disagreement here is "scientific" and empirical, an agreement which might be settled by appeal to the "facts" of human psychology. Nietzsche would also object to those naturalistic conceptions of morality which move from an appeal to individual needs and desires to an abstract stand-

ard which no longer appeals to these needs and desires directly. In utilitarianism, most importantly, Nietzsche despises the "shopkeeper mentality" that moves from the alleged need and desire for happiness in each individual to the need and desire for the happiness of all.

Nietzsche's moral nihilism presupposes the will to power as its standard. Nietzsche's nihilism is, put in its basic form, the attack upon and rejection of every conception of morality which does not acknowledge the will to power. Although the term "nihilism" has several senses in Nietzsche's philosophy, and although the standard of the will to power emerges only slowly and rather late in his writings, we can justifiably say, with the above qualifications, that Nietzsche's nihilism and his philosophy of power are one and the same set of doctrines.

6.

In closing, it might be helpful to comment upon a second, related paradox which has haunted our discussion from its very beginning. Nietzsche sometimes insists that "philosophers must be legislators" and "creators of value." He himself insists that his intention is to offer us new values and a new type of man (the *Übermensch*). This is hardly consistent with his sarcastic attacks upon the "improvers of mankind" and all those who tell us "what man *ought* to be." The same paradox arises in a more substantial way: Nietzsche claims that all values and all actions are based upon the will to power. But then what is his ethics? If we do in fact act according to the will to power, it is pointless to tell us we *ought* to act accordingly. And, bringing these two formulations together, what is the point of having philosophers who are legislators and creators of value if all values are based upon the will to power?

The paradox begins to resolve itself, however, as soon as we move from a demand for new values to a demand for a new *conception* of values, from the attack on morality to an attack on certain *conceptions* of morality. If we do (psychologically) necessarily act according to the will to power, it makes no sense to formulate an ethics which urges us to do so, and there are no value systems (including "morality") which do not conform to the will to power. But there is a real need for an understanding of "the springs of human action," and there is a real objection—not to morality, but to those *conceptions* of morality which attempt to universalize and impose their will to power upon people very different.

In other words, Nietzsche's intent is to give us a new conception of value ("the value of value," "the revaluation of all values") in terms of the will to power, to show us how morality (as a set of particular action-guiding principles) acts as an expression of the will to power in some people, but then to limit the validity of such principles by attacking those *conceptions* of morality which parade these principles as if they were something *more* than personal expressions of the will to power. In this sense, Nietzsche is not after new values after all, nor can we take him completely seriously when he has his Zarathustra announce the advent of a new kind of man. What he urges upon us is not "legislation" of values but to "become who you are." This is far from being a trivial demand; Nietzsche would urge [cf. Sartre's nominally similar conception of human consciousness] that none of us "is who he is." The most difficult task is to "overcome ourselves," to overcome that personal timidity which allows us to accept the imposition of external standards of value which are harmful to ourselves. Unfortunately, this most important challenge remains a series of slogans and allegories in Nietzsche's writings. To be totally charitable: perhaps that is his way of urging us to follow ourselves, not him.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE WILL TO POWER

WALTER KAUFMANN

We need not here examine, or even enumerate, all the phenomena that Nietzsche would explain, in the *Dawn*—and then in *The Gay Science*—as prompted by a will to power; for his psychology is of interest here primarily insofar as it clarifies the meaning of “power”—a word that is easily misconstrued. It will therefore be sufficient to list a few examples. There is, first, man’s desire to find scapegoats, the quest of the weak and the impotent to find somebody upon whom they can look down and to whom they may feel superior (*Dawn* 140); *Grosse Politik* (power politics) is prompted not only by the princes’ and potentates’ lust for power but also by a desire among “the lower strata of the nation” for a feeling of might (*Dawn* 189); dishonesty in business, arson committed by those who wish to collect insurance, counterfeiting, and stock market speculation may all be prompted by a lust for money which, in turn, is wanted because it gives a feeling of power: the craving is the same as that which inspired previous generations when they “burnt Jews, heretics, and good books, and destroyed entire higher cultures, as that of Peru and Mexico”:

The means of the craving for power have changed, but the same volcano is still glowing . . . and what one did formerly “for God’s sake” one does now for the sake of money . . . which *now* gives the highest feeling of power . . . (*Dawn* 204).

The next aphorism, which contains an extensive eulogy of the Jews, contains an attempt to explain their usury in past centuries as an effort to achieve a feeling of power through the one occupation left to them: “for our self-respect depends on our ability to repay in kind both the good and bad.” Even self-sacrifice may give an increased feeling of power, for one identifies oneself with a greater power, “be it a god or man,” and glories in his might (*Dawn* 145, 215).

Another type of behavior is explained in terms of the same

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paradox: if there should ever be a socialist state, it would enforce an unprecedented iron discipline—"they know themselves"—and the citizens would put up with their chains because "they are self-imposed, and the feeling of . . . *this* power is so young and charming to them that they would suffer anything for its sake" (Dawn 184).

Napoleon is introduced: he "was annoyed because he spoke badly"; he decided, however, "to speak even worse *than he could speak*," for he did not want to be the slave of his shortcomings: he wanted to have the power to determine his manner of speaking (Dawn 245).

Utilitarian behavior, such as kindness inspired either by the apprehension that unkindness would lead to an infraction of one's power or by the positive desire to inspire trust, is prompted by a will to power (Dawn 248). And happiness is now taken to be essentially a feeling of power: its usual expressions are "giving, deriding, destroying—all three with one common basic drive" (Dawn 356).

Suddenly it occurred to Nietzsche that the basic drive that prompted the development of Greek culture might well have been the will to power. He notes his conviction that the Greeks preferred power to anything "useful" and even to a good reputation (Dawn 360); and the second mention of the "will to power"—by that name—occurs in the notes of that period and insists that the ancient Greeks frankly admitted their will to power (x, 414). This sudden association of the will to power with the Greeks was one of the most decisive steps in the development of this conception into an all-embracing monism.

Nietzsche had previously considered the contest (*agon*) the most fruitful concept for any analysis of Greek culture. He had thought not only of the rivalry of the ancient dramatists who vied with each other for the highest prize, but also of the Olympic games and the Greek gymnasium (II, 376); of Plato's effort to outdo the Sophists and the poets by composing more beautiful myths, speeches, and dialogues than they had ever conceived (II, 377); and of the Socratic dialectic, which he understood as a spiritual contest (VII, 191; Dawn 544). Now it occurred to him that the contest itself was a manifestation of the will to power.

The will to power is thus not only the devil who diverts man from achieving culture, or a psychological urge that helps to explain diverse and complex types of human behavior: it is also envisaged as the basis of Greek culture, which Nietzsche then considered the acme of humanity. Instead of being associ-

ated primarily with neurotics who crave pity, with modern man's lust for money, with the burning of heretics and good books, with usury and counterfeiting, the will to power may now be envisaged as the basic drive of *all* human efforts. Philosophic discourse, the ancient tragedies and comedies, the Platonic dialogues, and the sculptures of the Periclean age are all understood in terms of the Greeks' will to outdo, excel, and overpower one another. Not only Athens and Sparta, and all the Greek city-states, but Aeschylus and Sophocles, Plato and Aristophanes, and all those who offered their speeches on love in the *Symposium* were competitors. Political and cultural achievements, art and philosophy are thus to be explained in terms of the will to power.

Nietzsche did not immediately recognize all these implications. Only in *Zarathustra* is the will to power proclaimed as the basic force underlying *all* human activities; and it is interesting to note that in *Zarathustra's* initial proclamation the culture of Greece is explicitly referred to and explained in terms of the will to power.

The philosophical significance of this monistic conception may be anticipated even now, if only by citing the first paragraph of Nietzsche's early fragment, *Homer's Contest* (1872):

When one speaks of *humanity*, the idea is fundamental that this is something that *separates* and distinguishes man from nature. In reality, however, there is no such separation: "natural" qualities and those called properly "human" are indivisibly grown together. Man, in his highest and most noble capacities, is wholly nature and embodies its uncanny dual character. Those of his abilities which are awesome and considered inhuman are perhaps the fertile soil out of which alone all humanity . . . can grow (II, 369).

This fragment, in which Nietzsche had planned to develop the conception of the contest, was begun at about the time when *The Birth of Tragedy* was published. It has been shown how Nietzsche developed the notion of the "uncanny dual character" of nature in his *Meditations* and how this bifurcation threatened in the end to break his entire philosophy in two. The conception of the will to power points to a new emphasis on the continuity of nature and culture.

Nietzsche had not yet succeeded in establishing his thesis that the values of humanity were mere developments of our animal nature. The essay on *Homer's Contest* had remained a fragment, and the *Meditations* failed to prove this point. The psychological considerations that led Nietzsche to the concep-

tion of the will to power suggest the possibility of a new attempt to show how values can be generated out of nature. Before this account of the *Dawn* is concluded, however, two further points should be developed.

First, Nietzsche offers some more comments on the relation of power and the will to power.

One should distinguish well: whoever still wants to gain the consciousness of power will use any means. . . . He, however, who has it, has become very choosy and noble in his tastes (*Dawn* 348).

The point is that the will to power may be ruthless and a source of evil-doing, while power itself does not corrupt but ennobles the mind. The powerful, as Nietzsche points out expressly, have no need to prove their might either to themselves or to others by oppressing or hurting others; if they do hurt others, they do so incidentally in the process of using their power creatively; they hurt others "without thinking of it." Only the weak man "*wishes* to hurt and to see the signs of suffering" (*Dawn* 371).

A good illustration of the manner in which a person who has power, in Nietzsche's sense, may hurt another person incidentally without the express wish of doing so, would be Goethe, whose loves Nietzsche probably had to learn by heart, like most other German students. Goethe—as German teachers like to point out—broke Friederike's heart by lavishing his love upon her and then not marrying her: here is one of the seeds of the Gretchen tragedy. Goethe, however, had no thought of seeing the poor girl suffer. Only the weak need to convince themselves and others of their might by inflicting hurt: the truly powerful are not concerned with others but act out of a fullness and an overflow.

Nietzsche, of course, does not say that the powerful *should* hurt others; he points out that *if* they hurt others they are not motivated by the wish to hurt. There is, however, an implication that impotence is dangerous for the human character: being oppressed and having to repress one's desires may lead to cruelty and the desire to hurt. Impotence may thus be a source of poison, and the possession of power may be a medicine: "*Medical Kit of the Soul: What is the strongest healing application?—Victory*" (*Dawn* 571). This is not a doctor's prescription, as it were, but an improvisation from a "medical kit" (*Feld-Apotheke*); it is a strong—"the strongest"—medicine, and thus it is dangerous and not to be prescribed generally.

The assumption is that the powerful and the impotent are both imbued with the will to power, and that extreme or prolonged oppression and frustration may easily pervert this drive and make the oppressed look for petty occasions to assert their will to power by being cruel to others.

The *second* and final consideration about the *Dawn* is this: we should ask expressly whether Nietzsche's conception of power has not been whitewashed. We should face the question whether Nietzsche did not, after all, have in mind political might. It so happens that the *Dawn* is quite unequivocal on this point. Three aphorisms will show quite definitely what Nietzsche had in mind.

The first of these three aphorisms may well be the most important one in the book and is entitled "*The Striving for Excellence.*" The title suggests correctly that this aphorism marks the transition from the old conception of the contest to the new one of the will to power. The aphorism, moreover, constitutes one of Nietzsche's first sustained attempts to reduce practically all of human behavior to this single striving, in one uninterrupted analysis. He proceeds to do this in terms of a scale. At the bottom of the scale is the barbarian who tortures others; at the top, the ascetic who tortures himself.

. . . Even when he who strives for excellence . . . wanted to make a delightful . . . impression, he did not enjoy this success insofar as he thus delighted his neighbor but insofar as he *impressed* himself on the soul of another, changed its form and ruled [*waltete*] over it according to his will. The striving for excellence is the striving to overwhelm [*überwältigen*] one's neighbor, even if only very indirectly or only in one's own feelings or even dreams. There is a long line of degrees of this secretly desired overwhelming, and a complete list of these would almost amount to a history of culture from the first still grimace-like barbarism to the grimace of . . . overrefinement. . . . The striving for excellence brings with it *for the neighbor*—to name only a few steps of this long ladder: tortures, then blows, then terror, then anguished amazement, then wonder, then envy, then laughing, then ridicule, then derision, then scorn, then the dealing of blows, then the inflicting of tortures: here, at the end of the ladder, stands the ascetic and martyr . . . (Dawn 113).

The "history of culture" is thus to be explained in terms of man's will to overwhelm, outdo, excel, and overpower his neighbor. The barbarian does it by torturing his neighbor. In the light of Nietzsche's previous comments, he is essentially

weak, else he would not need to inflict hurt. Nietzsche speaks of this as a low degree of the striving for excellence because he wishes to express that, *quantitatively*, we find little power at the bottom of the scale. Toward the middle of the scale, we find what might be called the normal degree of power: one seeks to evoke envy and admiration; one even seeks to elevate one's neighbor and derives a sense of power from doing so; one gives him joy and gaiety and lets him laugh, saying to oneself, as it were: I have the power to impress and delight him.

If our interpretation of the quantitateness of these degrees were correct, it would follow that Nietzsche believed the ascetic to have a greater feeling of power than almost any other man; and this is fully borne out by the aphorism:

Indeed, happiness—taken as the most alive feeling of power—has perhaps nowhere on earth been greater than in the souls of superstitious ascetics. This the Brahmins express in the story of the king Vishvamitra, who derived such strength from thousands of years of *penance exercises* that he undertook to build a new heaven (Dawn 113; cf. GM III 10).

So serious is Nietzsche about this point—that ascetic self-torture is the source of the greatest possible feeling of power—that he concludes with a vision of God to develop the point more fully.

Supposing that there were a God of love: what enjoyment for him to create *suffering* men and to suffer the . . . torture of looking upon them . . . What deliria of the divine ascetic are to be conjectured as he creates sin and sinners and eternal damnations and, beneath his heaven and throne, a tremendous site of eternal agony and of eternal sobbing and sighing! It is entirely impossible that the souls of Paul, of Dante, of Calvin . . . once penetrated the gruesome secrets of such voluptuousness of power . . . (Dawn 113).

With this grotesque vision, the whole scale might begin all over again, as Nietzsche actually suggests. At the bottom was the barbarian who tortured his neighbor, at the top the ascetic who tortured himself; now one might conceive of an ascetic's torture of his beloved neighbor as a new form of self-torture.

This aphorism is of momentous significance. Nietzsche comes close to a solution of the problem that his early theory of values had been unable to solve, but he does not realize

this and loses the key that might lead to the coveted answer. Nietzsche thinks of quantitative degrees of power as corresponding to various forms of behavior and of culture; and the saint—who was in his early philosophy, together with artist and philosopher, the most valuable human being—is considered the most powerful man. The barbarian, who is uncultured, is the least powerful. Power might thus be construed as the standard and measure of values. This would go well with Nietzsche's interpretation of health as the ability to overcome disease. For health he might substitute power. The artist's power consists in his ability to overcome disease and suffering. Here was at least a possible way of trying to cope with some of the problems of his early theory.

Nietzsche fails to see this and repudiates asceticism as a "grimace of overrefinement," i.e., a grotesque perversion. Both barbarian and ascetic are "grimaces," both are not representatives of true culture. The vision of the ascetic's torture of others—to make himself suffer—makes this clear.

Culture apparently is not the manifestation of the greatest power; it is somewhere along the middle of the scale. Nietzsche's repudiation of the barbarian, however, is clear, and political power was to his mind essentially a form of barbarism. This is expressly emphasized in the two aphorisms with which this account of the *Dawn* may be concluded.

Victory over Strength. . . . Still one lies on one's knees before strength—according to the ancient habit of slaves—and yet, when the degree of *worthiness of being honored* is to be determined, only *the degree of reason in strength* is decisive: one must measure how far strength has been overcome by something higher and now serves that as its tool and means! (Dawn 548).

The might of the German *Reich* does not impress Nietzsche. To bow before such strength is slavish. One might expect Nietzsche to base his repudiation on the assertion that only a weak nation finds it necessary to impress itself and others with barbarian brawn and armies, and that culture is a higher, i.e., a quantitatively greater, form of power. Instead Nietzsche refers to "the degree of reason in strength [*der Grad der Vernunft in der Kraft*]."

There is thus a strong suggestion of dualism: power appears almost as an evil principle, reason as the good. This repudiation of power as an evil principle becomes explicit in Nietzsche's denunciation of the German *Reich*. It is repudi-

ated not because brawn is a manifestation of small power, but because power is a demon.

The Demon of Power. Not need, nor desire—no, the love of power is the demon of man. One may give them everything—health, nourishment, quarters . . .—they remain unhappy . . . : for the demon . . . will be satisfied. One may take everything away from them and satisfy this demon: then they are almost happy. . . . Luther has already said this, and better than I, in these verses: "If they take from us body, goods, honor, child, and wife: let it go—the *Reich* must yet remain to us!" Yes! Yes! The "*Reich*!" (Dawn 262).

Luther, to be sure, had in mind the kingdom of God; Nietzsche, however, is *not* here considering Luther's words as an illustration of his own view that the Christian's sacrifice of body, goods, honor, child, and wife is really prompted by the desire for greater power in the kingdom of God beyond. Nietzsche is looking upon the German *Reich* of Bismarck, upon a nation thrilled by its love of power, upon a people willing to risk their bodies, their goods, and their children in war, a people who would "let go" even their "honor"—for the sake of the *Reich*. "Yes! Yes! The '*Reich*'!"

Nietzsche's position invites comparison with his repudiation of Rousseau in his third *Meditation*: his opposition is violent—but his right to that opposition is not quite clear. Perhaps the very passion of his repudiation was due in part to the fact that the *Reich* represented a position seemingly similar to his own and yet so completely opposed to his. Here was a frankly manifested will to power—but he did not mean that sort of power.

Thus Nietzsche seems to be relapsing into his early dualism. Instead of declaring that only the weak delight in brawn and that value can be measured in terms of the *quantitative* degree of power, Nietzsche introduces reason as his value standard. He speaks of power as the demon of man and proclaims that reason must control strength. There are two forces, one evil and the other good. The situation is reminiscent of Nietzsche's early philosophy. Still, the Dionysian forces of darkness are opposed to the sun god Apollo.

III

The choice of Zarathustra as his great protagonist may have been suggested to Nietzsche by his own dualistic tendencies. Here was the founder of a great dualistic religion, the prophet

of light and darkness, Good and Evil, Ormazd and Ahriman.¹ Here was a religion that did not present its believers with an omnipotent and omniscient God: here was a world-view much like that which Nietzsche himself had developed in the *Meditations* when he pictured nature as purposive but inefficient and in need of man's aid. Zarathustra, too, had told man of a purpose in nature (Ormázd) that would be able to win out in its struggle—if man would aid it.

Nietzsche, however, repudiated his earlier dualism through the very mouth of his Zarathustra.² Apparently, Dionysus defeats Apollo; the demon of darkness overpowers the restraining forces of the sun god; and reason is no longer recognized as the supreme principle and standard of values. This interpretation, however, would be only partly correct. To be sure, the self-styled Dionysian dithyrambs of *Zarathustra* (EH-Z 7) symbolize Nietzsche's departure from the Apollinian articulateness of his aphoristic style. It is further true that the will to power is proclaimed the one and only basic force of the cosmos. It remains to be seen, however, whether the conception of the will to power that is now evolved is really the Dionysian in a new guise, or whether it is not perhaps just as much the heir of Apollo as it is that of Dionysus.

Nietzsche had faced the choice between a dualism (of reason and will to power) and a monism (of only the will to power). The dualism was suggested in Nietzsche's declaration that only the degree of reason in strength could be the standard of valuation. The monism was suggested in Nietzsche's idea that quantitative degrees of power might be the measure of value. If one takes the example of Nietzsche's repudiation of the *Reich*, one can trace the lines his objections would have to take, according to which view he would embrace: as a *dualist*, he would say that the *Reich* was powerful, but that there was too little rationality in its might; as a *monist*, he would assert that the brawn of the *Reich* was actually an expression of weakness. The basic conception of Nietzsche's final theory of values is thus clear even now:

¹ Gustav Theodor Fechner, *Zendavesta* (1851), had admittedly chosen the Persian title to give expression to his own dualistic conception of the day and night sides of the world.

² Nietzsche himself remarked that his Zarathustra proclaimed a view that was the opposite of the real Zarathustra's. Nietzsche added that he chose Zarathustra as his protagonist because he was the first one to commit "the error": therefore, he had to be the first one to repudiate it. (EH IV 3) It seems to have gone unnoticed, however, *how close Nietzsche himself had come to the real Zarathustra's view.*

qualitative differences between various modes of power are reducible to more basic quantitative differences; rationality is taken to be the mark of great power; and with this crucial "qualification," *the quantitative degree of power is the measure of value.*

First of all, however, we must consider Zarathustra's proclamation of the will to power. The small number of passages containing any overt reference to it permit great brevity of exposition, while the fact that this is the first work where the "will to power" is introduced, and that Nietzsche prized this book more highly than anything else he wrote, makes it desirable not to skip these few passages.

Nietzsche first speaks of the "will to power" in the chapter "On the Thousand and One Goals." The chapter begins with moral relativism. Different nations have—this is the meaning of the title—different goals and moral codes. All of these, however, have one thing in common: they are creations of the will to power.

Nietzsche's difference with those who would rationalize the valuations of their own society is apparent. Against them he urges moral relativism, and—lacking any revelation—he cannot *a priori* assert the superiority of the values of his own society; nor can he judge, or even compare, the values of different societies unless they have something in common. Against the relativists, however, Nietzsche urges that there is a common element that makes possible comparative judgments of value about the moral codes of various societies.

A table of virtues hangs over every people. Behold, it is the table of its overcomings; behold, it is the voice of its will to power. Praiseworthy is whatever seems difficult to a people; whatever seems indispensable and difficult is called good; and . . . the rarest, the most difficult—that they call holy.³

The will to power is thus introduced as the will to overcome *oneself*. That this is no accident is certain. The will to power is not mentioned again until much later—and then at

³ The definition of the holy seems to have been influenced by the final words of Spinoza's *Ethics*. "Overcoming" as a translation of *Überwindung*—and "self-overcoming" for *Selbstüberwindung*—is admittedly inadequate, but self-surpassing, self-transcendence, and self-conquest would be worse though each suggests something of the connotation of the German word. The significance of Nietzsche's conception will be considered at length in the text.

length—in the chapter “On Self-Overcoming.” After that, it is mentioned only once more in *Zarathustra*. The will to power is conceived of as the will to overcome oneself.

Nietzsche asserts that moral goodness consists in doing what is difficult. To do the easy is not “morally good.” He then proceeds as follows:

Whatever makes it [a people] rule and triumph and shine, to its neighbor’s awe and envy: that is to it the high, the first, the measure, the meaning of all things.

It might seem that besides self-overcoming Nietzsche thinks of overcoming one’s neighbor. In his discussion of “the striving for excellence” in the *Dawn*, Nietzsche presented a scale of degrees of excellence, and the striving to arouse one’s neighbor’s awe and envy was placed nearer the bottom of that scale than the striving to arouse his admiration or to show one’s power by elevating him. Now, while there is a suggestion of a contest between nations, each is trying to overcome *itself* to such a degree that it arouses its neighbors’ awe and envy. In Nietzsche’s vision the globe becomes a Greek gymnasium where all nations vie with each other, each trying to overcome itself and thus to excel all others.

A few sentences later, the Greeks are introduced as one of four historical illustrations; the others are, in that order, the Persians, the Jews, and the Germans:

“You shall always be the first and excel all others: your jealous soul shall love no one, unless it be the friend”—that made the soul of the Greek quiver: thus he walked the path of his greatness.

“To speak the truth and to handle bow and arrow well”—that seemed both dear and difficult to the people who gave me [*Zarathustra*] my name . . .

“To honor father and mother and to follow their will to the root of one’s soul”—this was the tablet of [self-] overcoming that another people hung up over themselves and became powerful and eternal thereby.

“To practice loyalty and, for the sake of loyalty, to risk honor and blood even for evil and dangerous things”—with this teaching another people conquered themselves; and through this self-conquest they became pregnant and heavy with great hopes.

The greatness of Greece is interpreted in terms of the conception of the contest which, in turn, is now taken as reducible to a will to power. The Persians, like the Greeks, strove for both physical and moral power, here represented by truth-telling and arrow-shooting.

The Jews' honoring of father and mother, however, seems to be a striving for moral excellence only, not for physical power, yet of them alone Nietzsche says specifically that they became powerful. The Greeks had physical strength as well as "something higher" (Dawn 548), and so did the Persians. Moral force alone, however, is sufficient to make a people a power to be reckoned with.

Nietzsche's comment on the Germans of Bismarck's *Reich* is interesting when considered in this light. It is perhaps impossible today to read his words without considering them prophetic.

Of course, Nietzsche's theory of values cannot ultimately rely on any world-order to see to it that moral force prevails, while physical force—if not controlled by morality—must perish. Any such superficial interpretation of history as a morally edifying success story is far indeed from Nietzsche's mind. He might, however, speak of his German contemporaries as manifesting a fundamental weakness by showing little moral force, and he might consider their valuations as prompted by a lack of true power.

Nietzsche's problem is still the same as ever: he distinguishes between power and true power, as he had earlier distinguished between nature and true nature and the empirical and the true self. His difference with Rousseau was that Rousseau spoke of nature and Nietzsche of true nature; his repudiation of the *Reich* comes down to this, that the *Reich* glories in its strength, which, however, is not true power, as Nietzsche sees it. To escape this dilemma, he would now posit a quantitative scale and consider "true" power as simply *more* power than, for example, the relatively small might of which his German contemporaries liked to boast.

Nietzsche would thus offer a novel solution for his earlier problems. Instead of assuming two qualitatively different principles, such as strength and reason, he would reduce both to a single, more fundamental force: the will to power. And the distinction of brawn and brains he would explain in terms of a quantitative difference between degrees of power. The conception of the will to power as essentially self-overcoming suggests further that Nietzsche's thought still moves along dialectical lines, as it did when he defined health as the ability to overcome disease: apparently, he would now broaden his earlier dialectical definition in an attempt to arrive at a general standard of values.

It is, however, far from plain what exactly is meant by

"self-overcoming"; nor is it evident in what manner we could gauge quantitative degrees of power. These are problems which will require further analysis. Zarathustra's speech "On Self-Overcoming" does not offer any clear answers to these questions; rather, it introduces two further problems which may be considered briefly.

The first of these two new points does not seem puzzling at first glance. Nietzsche suggests that the pursuit of philosophy is prompted by the will to power. This is entirely consistent with his earlier view that artist, saint, and philosopher are the most truly *human* beings. He has since shown how the saint (ascetic) is one of the most powerful of men, and he would now add that the philosopher's excellence, too, corresponds to a similarly high position on the power scale. But Nietzsche raises a new and difficult question by suggesting that the will to truth is a function of the will to power.

"Will to truth" you call it . . . ? A will to the thinkability of all being: this *I* call your will. All being you want to *make* thinkable: for you doubt, with well-founded suspicion, whether it is thinkable. Yet it shall yield and bend for you. . . . Smooth it shall become and serve the spirit as its mirror and reflection. That is your entire will . . . a will to power—also when you speak of good and evil and valuations (Z II 12).

It may seem to make the will to power more attractive that one can exert it by being a philosopher, without harming anyone; nor does Nietzsche's thought lack plausibility. Even as Alexander and Napoleon went out to conquer the world with their armed might, Aristotle and Hegel tried to subdue the entire cosmos, without cavalry and cannon, by sheer force of mind. This is not just Zarathustra's poetic proclamation but one of Nietzsche's characteristic declarations about the will to power. "Philosophy is this tyrannic urge itself, the most spiritual will to power" (BGE 9).

This conception, however, which—at first glance—seems to fit Nietzsche's philosophy so well by placing the philosopher at the pinnacle of the power scale, may yet be dangerous. By including truth within the confines of this theory of the will to power, he has perhaps called in a Trojan Horse that threatens his entire philosophy with ruin.

What Nietzsche intended was presumably a polemic against the view that had found eloquent expression in Hegel's famous declaration: "The initially hidden and precluded essence of the universe has no strength to resist the courage of

knowledge.”⁴ These words, in which Hegel had meant to deny the doctrine of the thing-in-itself by claiming that the triumph of knowledge was complete and that no surd could escape its omnipotent grasp seemed to Nietzsche to be proof of “Hegel’s Gothic heaven-storming” (xvi, 82). Nietzsche insinuates that the world is *not* knowable. This may seem modest and unproblematic enough, yet Nietzsche’s statement of his position invites criticism.

He looked upon himself as an experimental philosopher who wished to break with a tradition of “unlimited ambition.” For the delusion of the metaphysicians that they might be able “to solve all with one stroke, with one word” and thus become “‘unriddlers of the universe,’” Nietzsche proposed to substitute “the small single questions and experiments” (Dawn 547). Now one can hardly help inquiring whether his vision of the will to power is still an attempt to answer “small single questions” with an “experiment”—or an effort “to solve all with one stroke, with one word” and to unriddle the universe with a phrase. Nietzsche himself does not answer this or other criticisms as explicitly as one might wish; but it may be permissible to venture a reply which he might perhaps have offered in his defense. His own conception of the will to power is not “metaphysical” in that sense of the word which contemporary positivists would attach to it: it is not a mere phrase but, unlike Schopenhauer’s “will,” essentially an empirical concept, arrived at by an induction. The aphoristic works which preceded *Zarathustra* had sought to answer small single questions in an open-minded essentially unsystematic spirit. Now the time for a more comprehensive inference had come.

Another criticism is apparently more serious. Nietzsche asserts that any attempt to understand the universe is prompted by man’s will to power. If so, it would seem that his own conception of the will to power must be admitted by him to be a creation of his will to power. Is not Nietzsche therefore in the predicament of Epimenides, the Cretan? If his assertion is correct, it is a fiction.

Nietzsche was not at his best with problems of this kind: he never worked out an entirely satisfactory theory of knowledge, and most of the relevant material remained in his notebooks and did not find its way into a more coherent presentation in his published works. Yet it seems necessary here

⁴ *Geschichte der Philosophie*, I, 22.

to meet this criticism in the best possible way—for if Nietzsche's philosophy were shown at this point to be self-refuting and absurd, it might seem futile to consider it further.

First of all, Nietzsche's view is not as different from Kant's as it is from Hegel's: Kant, too, would have denied that the world "has no strength to resist the courage of knowledge." Thus Kant set himself the task of discovering those necessary forms of the human mind to which all phenomena—i.e., all that appears to the human mind—must necessarily conform and be subject. While phenomenal experience might be a vast fabrication of the human mind, this "fiction" must be considered necessary: it follows iron-clad rules and is not "subjective" in the sense that it would leave the individual any leeway. Our mind, says Kant, is so definitively constituted along the lines developed in his theory of knowledge that synthetic *a priori* judgments about all human experience, past, present, and future, are possible. While Kant's theory does not start out on the assumption that there is a God, he abstracts from the divine existence only histrionically, without really doubting it. Hence he is not driven to the conclusion that the human mind, including the faculty of reason, is a freak—and that the faith in God which, as he claims, is an inevitable postulate of practical reason, is perhaps merely due to a certain queerness of our constitution. Only the Darwinian doctrine of evolution lent any great impetus to such conclusions; but Kant's position came singularly close to them. As has been pointed out in a previous chapter, however, Kant did not think of the human reason as a naturalistic datum that might be studied scientifically; he still believed in a whole rational order—and the phrase so often used by him, "not only man but all rational beings," with its traditional suggestion that man shares reason with God and the angels, shows clearly how far Kant was from considering reason a mere peculiarity of *Homo sapiens*.

Nietzsche, coming after Darwin, felt impelled "to substitute for the Kantian question: 'how are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?' another question: 'Why is the belief in such judgments *necessary*?' " And he even questioned that this belief was "necessary" in the sense of being required by the make-up of the human mind; instead he suggested "that for the sake of the survival of beings like ourselves such judgments must be *believed* to be true, though they might, of course, be *false* judgments for all that" (BGE 11).

More important: Nietzsche, who questioned the existence

of God "existentially"—with all his heart and soul—could not anchor his own conception of the will to power in any divine ground. That, however, did not prevent him from conceiving of the will to power as a universal feature of the human constitution, whose fictions must be considered necessary (for man) because they are not subjective: they leave no leeway for individual differences between one man's thinking and another's. Nietzsche's Epimenidean predicament then appears in a new light. His theory of the will to power might be the one and only interpretation of human behavior of which we are capable when we consider the evidence and think about it as clearly as we can. Not only Nietzsche but mankind would then be in the position of the Cretan, and the dilemma—however ridiculous it might seem to the angel Gabriel—would be inescapable for us. This reply to an obvious and dangerous criticism is, of course, not to be found in Nietzsche's writings in this form, but the interpretation offered here is by no means superimposed upon him. It finds ample support in his writings and furnishes at least part of the necessary background for his occasional assertions that there "really" is no will, or that the will is "really" a fiction.

There is yet one final point about the will to power made in the chapter "On Self-Overcoming." Nietzsche claims that it is not only the basic urge of man but nothing less than the fundamental drive of all living beings: "Wherever I found the living, there I found the will to power."

"Only where there is life, there is also will: not will to life but . . . will to power. There is much that life esteems more highly than life itself; but out of the esteeming itself speaks the will to power." Thus life taught me. . . .

Even this extreme generalization, the bold statement that all living beings are imbued with a will to power, is evidently offered in an empirical spirit. One may criticize Nietzsche for having performed an induction that is unconvincing; one may argue that he misconstrued his evidence or depended on insufficient data; one may scrutinize the terms "will" and "power" and inquire whether Nietzsche's view depends on certain ambiguities of these two words—one will yet have to admit that Nietzsche based his theory on empirical data and not on any dialectical ratiocination about Schopenhauer's metaphysics, as is so often supposed erroneously. The conclusion "Thus life taught me" is probably intended to stress that Nietzsche's insight is based on experience.

Of course, up to this point only some of Nietzsche's psychological evidence has been submitted; but if one wants to consider, the data he adduced from the rest of nature, one must turn to his later writings. There one will find much further evidence as well as the still more extreme hypothesis that the will to power is the basic force of the entire universe. If all this should seem to contradict the view of the will to power developed in reply to the Epimenidean criticism, it may be suggested that the constitution of the human mind might conceivably require it to interpret not only human behavior but the entire cosmos in terms of the will to power. The most obvious objection at this point is, no doubt, that it seems empirically untrue that our minds are so constituted that, when we consider phenomena and think as carefully and cogently as we can, we are driven to assume that the will to power is the basic principle of the universe. This criticism seems not only relevant but, in the end, unanswerable. To evaluate this criticism and Nietzsche's position properly, it seems necessary, however, to accord a more systematic treatment to his final philosophy. By putting a number of questions to Nietzsche it will be possible to elicit the meaning of his later views better than could be done by proceeding further, book by book. For with *Zarathustra*, the discovery of the will to power as well as Nietzsche's philosophic "development" is completed; the gap between his early and late work has been bridged; and we may now ask whether the difficulties that arose in the context of his youthful dualism can be resolved through his monistic philosophy of power.

RESSENTIMENT

MAX SCHELER

On the Phenomenology and Sociology of *Ressentiment*

Among the scanty discoveries which have been made in recent times about the origin of moral judgments, Friedrich Nietzsche's discovery that *ressentiment* can be the source of such value judgments is the most profound. This remains true even if his specific characterization of Christian love as the most delicate "flower of *ressentiment*" should turn out to be mistaken.

"But *this* is the event: out of the stem of that tree of revenge and hatred, of Jewish hatred—the most profound and sublime of all, the hatred which creates ideals and transforms values and which has never had its like on earth—there grew something equally incomparable, a *new love*, the most profound and sublime kind of love:—and indeed from what other stem could it have grown? . . . But let us not think that it grew as the negation of that thirst for revenge, as the antithesis of Jewish hatred! No, the reverse is true! This love grew from it as its crown, as the triumphant crown unfolding ever more broadly in the purest brightness and solar plenitude. In the lofty realm of light, so to speak, it aimed at the goals of that hatred, at victory, booty, seduction—with the same urge which made the roots of that hatred dig more and more thoroughly and covetously into whatever had depth and was evil. This Jesus of Nazareth, as the living Gospel of Love, this "Saviour" who brought bliss and victory to the poor, the sick, the sinners—did he not represent seduction in its most sinister and most irresistible form, seduction and a detour to precisely those *Jewish* values and innovations of the ideal? Is it not true that Israel has reached the final aim of its sublime vindictiveness through this 'Saviour,' this seeming adversary and destroyer of Israel?" (GM I 8).

"The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and produces values: the *ressentiment* of beings to whom the real reaction, that of the deed, is

Reprinted with permission of The Macmillan Company from *Ressentiment* by Max Scheler, translated by William Holdheim, ed. by Lewis A. Coser. Copyright © The Free Press, a corporation 1961, pp. 43–46, 79–89, 95–97, 103–11, 114.

denied, who can only indulge in imaginary revenge. Whereas every noble morality springs from a triumphant acceptance and affirmation of oneself, slave morality is in its very essence a negation of everything 'outside' and 'different,' of whatever is 'not oneself': and *this* negation is its creative deed. This reversal of the perspective of valuation—this necessary determination by the outside rather than by oneself—is typical of *ressentiment*: in order to arise, slave morality always needs a hostile external world. Physiologically speaking, it needs external stimuli in order to act at all,—its action is fundamentally a reaction." (I 10).

—"I see nothing, I hear all the more. It is a cautious, a gentle and insidious muttering and whispering in all nooks and corners. It seems to me that they are lying; a sugary mildness sticks to every sound. Weakness is to be made a *merit*, there can be no doubt—it is as you said"—

—"Go on!"

—"and impotence, inability to retaliate, is to become 'goodness'; timorous lowliness becomes 'humility'; submission to those whom one hates is 'obedience' (obedience toward one of whom they say that he decrees this submission,—they call him God). The inoffensiveness of the weak, even the cowardice in which he is rich, his unavoidable obligation to wait at the door acquires a good name, as 'patience,' it is also called virtue; the inability to avenge oneself is supposed to be a voluntary renunciation of revenge, sometimes it is even called forgiveness ('for *they* know not what they do—we alone know what *they* do!'). They also speak of 'love for one's enemies,'—and they sweat while doing so." (I 14).

These are the chief passages in which Friedrich Nietzsche develops his remarkable thesis. For the moment, let us ignore the relation of *ressentiment* to Christian values in order to penetrate more deeply into the *unit of experience* designated by the term.

Instead of defining the word, let us briefly characterize or describe the phenomenon. *Ressentiment* is a self-poisoning of the mind which has quite definite causes and consequences. It is a lasting mental attitude, caused by the systematic repression of certain emotions and affects which, as such, are normal components of human nature. Their repression leads to the constant tendency to indulge in certain kinds of value delusions and corresponding value judgments. The emotions and affects primarily concerned are revenge, hatred, malice, envy, the impulse to detract, and spite.

Thirst for revenge is the most important source of *ressentiment*. As we have seen, the very term "*ressentiment*" indicates that we have to do with reactions which presuppose the previous apprehension of another person's state of mind. The desire for revenge—in contrast with all active and aggressive impulses, be they friendly or hostile—is also such a reactive impulse. It is always preceded by an attack or an injury. Yet it must be clearly distinguished from the impulse for reprisals or self-defense, even when this reaction is accompanied by anger, fury, or indignation. If an animal bites its attacker, this cannot be called "revenge." Nor does an immediate reprisal against a box on the ear fall under this heading. Revenge is distinguished by two essential characteristics. First of all, the immediate reactive impulse, with the accompanying emotions of anger and rage, is temporarily or at least momentarily checked and restrained, and the response is consequently postponed to a later time and to a more suitable occasion ("just wait till next time"). This blockage is caused by the reflection that an immediate reaction would lead to defeat, and by a concomitant pronounced feeling of "inability" and "impotence." Thus even revenge as such, based as it is upon an experience of impotence, is always primarily a matter of those who are "weak" in some respect. Furthermore, it is of the essence of revenge that it always contains the *consciousness* of "tit for tat," so that it is never a mere emotional reaction. . . .

Ressentiment and Moral Value Judgment

The Recognition that there have been *several* "moralities" in the world, not just one, is one of the most important results of modern ethics.¹ One tends to think that this is old news, as old as the insight into the so-called "historical relativity" of customs. That is a complete error. The adherents of so-called ethical relativism—for example, the modern positivists Comte, Mill, Spencer, etc.—are precisely those who have most thoroughly misunderstood the whole question. The relativists merely show that different ways of acting have been deemed useful for "human welfare," the "exaltation of life," or whatever else the relativist philosopher himself judges to be the greatest good—and that these differences depend upon the level of knowledge and civilization. Thus in a preponderantly military society, where war is a means of acquisition, such

¹ Cf. Scheler's *Formalism in Ethics and the Non-Formal Ethic of Value*.

virtues as courage and bravery are more useful for the "general welfare" than industry, diligence, and honesty, which will find preference in an industrial society. Often, as among the early Germanic tribes, pillage is a smaller crime than theft. But the relativists affirm that the basic *value* has remained the same. All variations are due to the different historical circumstances to which this basic value (for example, welfare) is applied. But a transformation of values is quite another thing. When we say that there have been several moralities, we mean that *the rules of preference between the values themselves* have varied, quite apart from all changes in the external conditions of life. A "morality" is a system of preference between the values themselves, a "moral constitution" which must be discovered *behind* the concrete valuations of a nation and an era. This system itself can undergo an evolution which has nothing at all to do with the growing adaptation of actions and judgments to changing conditions. In the latter case, the evaluations of certain actions, convictions, or types of men may have changed, but the ultimate criterion (such as general welfare) has remained the same. But there have been primary transformations of the moral systems themselves, independently of mere adaptations. Actually, the so-called ethical "relativists" have always been the absolutists of their own particular periods. They interpret the variations in moral judgments as stages in the "development" toward present-day morality, by which they wrongly measure the past. They do not even see the primary variations in the ways of judging, the rules of preference themselves. It is ethical absolutism, the doctrine which teaches that there are eternal evident laws of preference and a corresponding eternal hierarchy of values, which has recognized and could afford to acknowledge this much more far-reaching relativity of value judgments. The relation between the various moralities and that eternally valid ethics is approximately the same as that between the different astronomical systems (for example, the Ptolemaic and the Copernican system) and the ideal system sought by astronomy. That intrinsically valid system is represented more or less adequately in the different moralities. The realities of life are themselves co-determined by the dominant moralities. Their emergence is influenced by primary judgments and decisions whose variations cannot in turn be explained as adaptations to these moralities. The history of moralities should learn from a recent insight of art history: the modifications of the ideal of

artistic representation and the stylistic forms are not exclusively determined by the changes in material means and technical know-how (as for example Semper thought), but the "artistic intention" itself has been subject to great change. Thus if the Greeks had no technical civilization, it is not because they were incapable (or "as yet" incapable) of creating one, but because they did not *wish* to create it. It would have run counter to the spirit of their "morality." By "morality" we mean the rules of preference *themselves* which govern a nation and an era, not the philosophical and scientific "representation" or "systematization" of these rules, which merely *deals* with a "morality."

Ressentiment brings about its most important achievement when it determines a whole "morality," perverting the rules of preference until what was "evil" appears to be "good." If we look at European history, we are struck by the enormous effectiveness of *ressentiment* in the formation of moralities. Our task is to determine its role in the formation of *Christian morality* on one hand, of *modern bourgeois morality* on the other. Here our view sharply departs from that of Friedrich Nietzsche:

We believe that the Christian values can very easily be perverted into *ressentiment* values and have often been thus conceived. But *the core of Christian ethics has not grown on the soil of ressentiment*. On the other hand, we believe that *the core of bourgeois morality*, which gradually replaced Christian morality ever since the 13th century and culminated in the French Revolution, *is rooted in ressentiment*. In the modern social movement, *ressentiment* has become an important determinant and has increasingly modified established morality.

First let us examine whether Christian morality was nourished and sustained by *ressentiment*.

Christian Morality and *Ressentiment*

Friedrich Nietzsche characterizes the idea of Christian love as the most delicate flower of *ressentiment*.

He believes that through this idea the *ressentiment* accumulated by an oppressed and at the same time vindictive nation, whose God was the "God of revenge" even when it was still politically and socially independent, is justified before this nation's consciousness (GM I 8).

If we fully appreciate the revolutionary character of the

change which leads from the ancient to the Christian idea of love—Nietzsche himself has done this only vaguely and inexactly—this Nietzschean statement is much less paradoxical than would appear at first sight. Indeed, his discovery is one of the most profound which has ever been made on this question and is fully worthy of the most serious consideration. I stress this all the more because I consider his theory to be *completely mistaken*.

The Greek and Roman philosophers and poets have expressed the significance and value of love in ancient morality with admirable clarity. . . . The most important difference between the ancient and Christian views of love lies in the *direction of its movement*. All ancient philosophers, poets, and moralists agree that love is a striving, an aspiration of the "lower" toward the "higher," the "unformed" toward the "formed," the "μῆϋν" towards the "ϋν," "appearance" towards "essence," "ignorance" towards "knowledge," a "mean between fulness and privation," as Plato says in the *Symposium*. Thus in all human love relations, such as marriage or friendship, a distinction must be made between a "lover" and a "beloved," and the latter is always nobler and more perfect. He is the *model* for the lover's being, willing, and acting. This conception, which grew from the relations of life in antiquity, finds its clearest expression in the numerous forms of Greek metaphysics. Already Plato says: "We would not love if we were Gods." For the most perfect form of being cannot know "aspiration" or "need." Here love is only a road to something else, a "*methodos*." And according to Aristotle, in all things there is rooted an upward urge (a ὁρέγεῖσθαι and ἐφίεῖσθαι) towards the deity, the Νοῦς, the self-sufficient thinker who "moves" the world as "prime mover." He does not move it as a being whose will and activity is directed toward the outside, but "as the beloved moves the lover" (Aristotle)—as it were *attracting*, enticing, and tempting it. In this idea, with its unique sublimity, beauty, and ancient coolness, the essence of the ancient conception of love is raised into the absolute and boundless. The universe is a great chain of dynamic spiritual entities, of forms of being ranging from the "prima materia" up to man—a chain in which the lower always strives for and is attracted by the higher, which never turns back but aspires upward in its turn. This process continues up to the deity, which itself does not love, but represents the eternally unmoving and unifying *goal* of all these aspirations of love. Too little attention has

been given to the peculiar relation between this idea of love and the principle of the "agon," the ambitious contest for the goal, which dominated Greek life in all its aspects—from the Gymnasium and the games to dialectics and the political life of the Greek city states. Even the objects try to surpass each other in a race for victory, in a cosmic "agon" for the deity. Here the prize that will crown the victor is extreme: it is a participation in the essence, knowledge, and abundance of "being." Love is only the dynamic principle, immanent in the universe, which sets in motion this great "agon" of all things for the deity.

Let us compare this with the Christian conception. In that conception there takes place what might be called a *reversal in the movement of love*. The Christian view boldly denies the Greek axiom that love is an aspiration of the lower towards the higher. On the contrary, now the criterion of love is that the nobler stoops to the vulgar, the healthy to the sick, the rich to the poor, the handsome to the ugly, the good and saintly to the bad and common, the Messiah to the sinners and publicans. The Christian is not afraid, like the ancient, that he might lose something by doing so, that he might impair his own nobility. He acts in the peculiarly pious conviction that through this "condescension," through this self-abasement and "self-renunciation" he gains the highest good and becomes equal to God. The change in the notion of God and his fundamental relation to man and the world is not the cause, but the *consequence* of this reversal in the movement of love. God is no longer the eternal unmoving goal—like a star—for the love of all things, moving the world as "the beloved moves the lover." Now the very *essence* of God is to love and serve. . . . Confining myself to the essential, I ask: whence this reversal? Is *ressentiment* really its main-spring?

The more I reflected on this question, the more clearly I realized that the root of Christian love is entirely *free* of *ressentiment*, but that *ressentiment* can very easily use it for its own purposes by simulating an emotion which corresponds to this idea. This simulation is often so perfect that even the sharpest observer can no longer distinguish real love from *ressentiment* which poses as love.

There are two fundamentally different ways for the strong to bend down to the weak, for the rich to help the poor, for the more perfect life to help the "less perfect." This action can be motivated by a powerful feeling of security, strength,

and inner salvation, of the invincible fulness of one's own life and existence. All this unites into the clear awareness that one is *rich enough* to share one's being and possessions. Love, sacrifice, help, the descent to the small and the weak, here spring from a spontaneous overflow of force, accompanied by bliss and deep inner calm. Compared to this natural readiness for love and sacrifice, all specific "egoism," the concern for oneself and one's interest, and even the instinct of "self-preservation" are signs of a blocked and weakened life. . . .

There is not a trace of *ressentiment* in all this. Nothing but a blissful ability to stoop, born from an abundance of force and nobility!

But there is a completely different way of stooping to the small, the lowly, and the common, even though it may seem almost the same. Here love does not spring from an abundance of vital power, from firmness and security. Here it is only a euphemism for *escape*, for the inability to "remain at home" with oneself (*chez soi*). Turning toward others is but the secondary consequence of this urge to flee from oneself. One cannot love anybody without turning away from oneself. However, the crucial question is whether this movement is prompted by the desire to turn toward a positive value, or whether the intention is a radical escape from oneself. "Love" of the second variety is inspired by self-hatred, by hatred of one's own weakness and misery. The mind is always on the point of departing for distant places. Afraid of seeing itself and its inferiority, it is driven to give itself to the other—not because of his worth, but merely for the sake of his "otherness." Modern philosophical jargon has found a revealing term for this phenomenon, one of the many modern substitutes for love: "altruism." This love is not directed at a previously discovered positive value, nor does any such value flash up in the act of loving: there is nothing but the urge to turn away from oneself and to lose oneself in other people's business. We all know a certain type of man frequently found among socialists, suffragettes, and all people with an ever-ready "social conscience"—the kind of person whose social activity is quite clearly prompted by inability to keep his attention focussed on himself, on his own tasks and problems. Looking away from oneself is here mistaken for love! Isn't it abundantly clear that "altruism," the interest in "others" and their lives, has nothing at all to do with love? The malicious or envious person also forgets his own interest, even his "preservation." He only thinks about the other man's feelings, about

the harm and the suffering he inflicts on him. Conversely, there is a form of genuine "self-love" which has nothing at all to do with "egoism." It is precisely the essential feature of egoism that it does not apprehend the full value of the isolated self. The egoist sees himself only with regard to the others, as a member of society who wishes to possess and acquire *more* than the others. Self-directedness or other-directedness have no essential bearing on the specific quality of love or hatred. These acts are different *in themselves*, quite independently of their direction.

Thus the "altruistic" urge is really a form of hatred, of self-hatred, *posing* as its opposite ("Love") in the false perspective of consciousness. In the same way, in *ressentiment* morality, love for the "small," the "poor," the "weak," and the "oppressed" is really disguised hatred, repressed envy, an impulse to detract, etc., directed against the opposite phenomena: "wealth," "strength," "power," "*largesse*." When hatred does not dare to come out into the open, it can be easily expressed in the form of ostensible love—love for something which has features that are the opposite of those of the hated object. This can happen in such a way that the hatred remains secret. When we hear that falsely pious, unctuous tone (it is the tone of a certain "socially-minded" type of priest), sermonizing that love for the "small" is our first duty, love for the "humble" in spirit, since God gives "grace" to them, then it is often only hatred posing as Christian love. We clearly feel how the sight of these phenomena fills the mind with secret "satisfaction" and how they themselves are loved, not the higher values which may lie behind them. Nor can the helping deed be the important thing in this perspective, since it would make the "small" less agreeable to God and would therefore be an expression of hatred. The whole value lies in *dwelling* upon these phenomena. And when we are told, in the same tone, that these people will be rewarded in "heaven" for their distress, and that "heaven" is the exact reverse of the earthly order ("the first shall be last"), we distinctly feel how the *ressentiment*-laden man transfers to God the vengeance he himself cannot wreak on the great. In this way, he can satisfy his revenge at least in imagination, with the aid of an other-worldly mechanism of rewards and punishments. The core of the *ressentiment* Christian's idea of God is still the avenging Jehovah. The only difference is that revenge is now masked as sham love for the "small." There is no longer any organic and experienced bond between the "kingdom of God" and the visible

realm, so that the values and laws of retaliation of the former have ceased to be simply a purer and more perfect expression of those which already appear in life. The "kingdom of God" has become the "other world," which stands mechanically beside "this world"—an opposition unknown to the strongest periods of Christianity. It is merely a plane of being where the shadows of the people and events we experienced carry on a dance led by *ressentiment*, according to a rhythm which is simply opposite to that of the earth. . . .

Just as there are *two* ways of stooping lovingly to the weak, we can distinguish (among others) *two* sources of *ascetic* actions and value judgments. The ascetic ideal of life may be founded on an estrangement from one's body which can actually turn into hatred. I already indicated that this attitude is frequently the consequence of repressed impulses of hatred and revenge. This state of mind is often expressed in reflections such as "the body is the prison of the soul," and it can lead to diverse forms of bodily self-torture. Here again, the primary motive is not *love* of one's *spiritual* self and the wish to perfect and hallow it by disciplining the body. What is primary is *hatred of the body*, and the concern for "salvation of the soul" is a pretense which is often added only later. Another outgrowth of *ressentiment* are those forms of the ascetic ideal and its practice which are to justify one's impotence to acquire certain things—as when inability to do lucrative work leads to the imperative of poverty, erotic and sexual impotence to the precept of chastity, lack of self-discipline to obedience, etc. Nietzsche believes that the core of Christian asceticism can also be interpreted in this way (GM III). In the ascetic ideal he sees the value reflex of a declining and exhausted life which secretly seeks death, even if its conscious will is different. Such life turns to ascetic values because they serve its hidden purpose. For Nietzsche, Christian asceticism as well falls under the rules and valuations which spring from *ressentiment*. Even virtues like the "toleration" of pain and misfortunes, and forgiveness and humility in the intercourse with others, are supposed to be due to *ressentiment*.

But asceticism can have completely different origins and an entirely different meaning. It may simply serve the purpose of educating the citizens for certain fixed national goals, such as war or hunting. An example would be the strongly "ascetic" education in Sparta. This type of asceticism is entirely foreign to our context. There is a much higher and nobler form, which springs from vital plenitude, strength, and unity and derives

meaning and value from life itself, from its glorification and greatest advancement, not from any transcendent goal. If this form of asceticism is to have any theoretical foundation, life must be viewed as an *autonomous* and *primary* agent, not reducible to mental phenomena (feelings, sensations), physical mechanisms, or a combination of both. Then inorganic matter and its mechanism is merely a medium for the representation and actualization of life, which is an organized structure of forms and functions. If we adopt this premise, then life also contains its own *values* which can never be reduced to utilitarian, hedonistic, or technical values. Then the strongest life is not that which functions with a *maximum* of natural or artificially created mechanisms which are adapted to the surroundings, but a life which is still able to exist, grow, and even advance with a *minimum* of such mechanisms. In this case ascetic morality is the *expression* of *strong* life, and its rules are destined in turn to exercise and develop the purely vital functions with decreasing use of the necessary mechanisms.

But when a hypothesis has the profundity of Nietzsche's speculation about the origin of Christian morality, it is not enough to reject it as false. We must also show how Nietzsche was led to his error and how it could gain for him such a high degree of probability.

There are two reasons. One is his *misjudgment* of the *essence* of Christian morality, notably of the Christian idea of love, in conjunction with the false standards by which he judges it (this last error is not historical and religious, but philosophical). The second reason lies in the factual *deformations* which Christian morality, starting with its early history, has undergone through reciprocal interchanges with values which have sprung from an entirely different historical background. These deformations often remained decisive for its future history.

There can be no doubt that the Christian ethos is inseparable from the Christian's *religious* conception of God and the world. It is meaningless without this foundation. There have been well-meaning attempts to invest it with a secular meaning which is separable from its religious significance, to discover in it the principles of a "humanistic" morality without religious premises. Such attempts, whether they are made by friends or foes of Christian religion, are fundamentally mistaken. At the very least, Christian morality must be tied to Christian religion by the assumption of a spiritual realm whose objects, contents, and values transcend not only the sensory sphere, but the

whole sphere of *life*. This is precisely what Jesus calls the "kingdom of God." The precept of love is addressed to man as a *member* of the kingdom of God, where all are solidary. Even the feeling of unity and community, insofar as it does exist in the Christian world, refers to the kingdom of God or is at least founded in it. However love, and the communion based on it, may work out in the secular forms of community, however much it may further our material welfare, free us from pain and create pleasure—all this is of value only if these communities, and the forces of love which cement them, have their living roots in the "kingdom of God" and refer back to it. This affirmation does not say to what degree the "kingdom of God" is represented either as "transcendent," "other-worldly," or as "immanent" and active in this world—to what degree it is represented as beginning after death or as always "present" and accessible to the pious. In any case it is conceived as a level of being—independent of the order, laws, and values of life—in which all the others are rooted and in which man finds the ultimate meaning and value of his existence.

If we fail to recognize this, then the Christian values—and all imperatives which spring from them—must be referred to a standard which, if valid, would indeed make them appear as values of decadence in the biological sense: the standard of what is most conducive to life. This is Nietzsche's interpretation. However, for the Christian, life—even in its highest form: human life—is never the "greatest good." Life, and therefore human society and history, is only important because it is the *stage* on which the "kingdom of God" must emerge. Whenever the preservation and advancement of life conflict with the realization of the values which exist in the kingdom of God, life becomes futile and is to be rejected, however valuable it may seem in itself. The body is not the "prison of the soul," as in Plato's dualism: it is the "temple of the holy Ghost" (I Cor. 6:19). Yet it is only a "temple" and does *not* constitute the ultimate value. Therefore it is said: "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out . . ." (Mark 9:47).

Love is not seen as a spiritual activity which *serves* life, nor as life's "strongest and deepest concentration" (Guyau). It is the activity and movement of love which endues life with its *highest meaning and value*. Therefore we can very well be asked to renounce life—and not only to sacrifice individual life for collective life, one's own life for somebody else's, or lower forms for higher forms of life: we can be asked to sacrifice

life as such, in its very essence, if such an act would further the values of the kingdom of God, whose mystic bond and whose spiritual source of strength is love. Nietzsche interprets Christianity from the outset as a mere "morality" with a religious "justification," not primarily as a "religion," and he applies to Christian values a standard which they themselves refuse consciously: the standard of the maximum quantity of life. Naturally he must conclude that the very postulation of a level of being and value which transcends life and is not relative to it must be the sign of a morality of decadence. This procedure, however, is completely arbitrary, philosophically wrong, and strictly refutable. The idea of goodness cannot be reduced to a biological value, just as little as the idea of truth. We must take this for granted here—the proof would lead too far.

For the same reason, Nietzsche necessarily erred in another respect. If the Christian precepts and imperatives, especially those which refer to love, are detached from the kingdom of God and from man's spiritual personality by which he participates in this kingdom (not to be mistaken for his "soul," which is natural), there is another serious consequence: those postulates must enter in *constitutive* (not only accidental) conflict with all the laws which govern the development, growth, and expansion of life.

I insist that love for one's neighbor, in the Christian sense, is not originally meant to be a biological, political, or social principle. It is directed—at least primarily—at *man's spiritual core*, his individual personality, through which alone he participates directly in the kingdom of God. Therefore Jesus is far removed from founding a new political order or a new economic distribution of property. He accepts the emperor's rule, the social distinction between master and slave, and all those natural instincts which cause *hostility* between men in public and private life. There is no idea of "general brotherhood," no demand for a leveling of national distinctions through the creation of a "universal community," corresponding to the Stoic ideal of a "universal state" ("cosmopolites") and a universal law of reason and nature. Nor is there any tendency to establish an independent Jewish state or to realize any social and political utopia. The immanence of the kingdom of God in man is not bound to any particular structure of state and society. . . .

Thus the greatest mistake would be to interpret the Christian movement on the basis of dim analogies with certain forms

of the modern social and democratic movement. Jesus is *not* a kind of "popular hero" and "social politician," a man who knows what ails the poor and the oppressed, an "enemy of Mammon" in the sense that he opposes capitalism as a form of social existence. Yet Friedrich Nietzsche's own conception of Christianity is strongly influenced by this widespread Jesus picture, which was propagated by Christian and non-Christian socialists. Therefore he thinks that the motives and arguments which set him against modern Socialism and Communism also apply to Christian morality and its genius. But Nietzsche's attack touches Jesus and the core of Christianity as little as the praise of those "socialists," since both share the same mistaken premise. Christianity does not contain the germ of modern socialist and democratic tendencies and value judgments. Nor did it ever affirm the "equality of souls before God," to which Nietzsche always points as the root of democracy—except in the sense that God's judgment on men is preceded by an elimination of the value delusions which are due to human situations, to human narrow-mindedness, blindness, and self-interest. But the notion that all men are equivalent "in God's eyes," that all value distinctions and the whole value aristocracy of human existence are merely based on anthropomorphic prejudice, one-sidedness, and weakness, is reminiscent of Spinoza and entirely foreign to Christianity. It is in radical contradiction with ideas such as "heaven," "purgatory," "hell," and with the whole internally and externally *aristocratic* structure of Christian-ecclesiastic society—a structure which is continued and culminates in the invisible kingdom of God. The autochthonous Christian notion would rather be the opposite: that God sees an immeasurable abundance of differences and value distinctions where our eyes, fixed on outward appearances, see nothing but a seeming uniformity in the values of men, races, groups, and individuals. According to Pascal, even the human "spirit" is characterized by the ability to grasp the inner difference between men below their uniform appearance.

. . .

Nietzsche ignored the fact that love in the Christian sense is always primarily directed at man's ideal spiritual self, at man as a member of the kingdom of God. Therefore he equated the Christian idea of love with a completely different idea which has quite another historical and psychological origin:

the idea and movement of modern universal love of man, "humanitarianism," "love of mankind," or more plastically: "love toward every member of the human race." We agree with Nietzsche that *ressentiment* was the real root of this idea.

NIETZSCHE AND POLITICS

TRACY STRONG

This is an age in which political scientists most often pursue political philosophy in bad faith. Either we desire a legitimate paternity to show we are merely considering age-old problems with filial sophistication; or else we engage in desiccated research to find the "political" message in a "non-political" theorist. "The Political Theory of . . ." Such a refrain too often serves only publishing mandates.

An essay on "Nietzsche and Politics" therefore requires some justification. There is no immediately apparent reason why I should drag together fragments which Nietzsche never saw fit to assemble into a book, nor indeed to make an openly dominant theme inside a single work. Perhaps no opinion has been so generally accepted about Nietzsche as that he was "anti-political."

The prevalence of this opinion is probably due to the controversies generated by the abuse the Nazis made of Nietzsche's thought. They read his thought so thoroughly and so inaccurately as a foundation for their politics that most modern commentators, desirous of being sympathetic to Nietzsche, have gone the other way and simply ignored any political dimensions Nietzsche's thought might have.

This is encouraged because the location of his political thought is not precisely identifiable from chapter titles and book names. There are a few generally unknown but important writings which deal specifically with political questions. Central among these is the early essay *The Greek State*. There are also sections of major works which deal with present-day political situations in a manner analogous to that with which Nietzsche deals with problems of morality, language, etc. These are found in short sections of *Human, All Too Human* ("A Look at the State"), several chapters in *Zarathustra* and in *Beyond Good and Evil* ("Peoples and Fatherlands," "The Natural History of Morals"). There is secondly and most im-

A preliminary version of this essay was given at the Northeastern Political Science Association meetings in November 1970. I am grateful for the comments of the panelists, especially those of Alasdair MacIntyre. I would also like to thank Ann Kreilkamp Cudmore, Alexander Keyssar and Robert Eden for their spiritual and intellectual advice during the writing of the paper.

This version was prepared especially for this volume.

portantly his analysis of the source and nature—the genealogy—of the present crisis of civilization: this Nietzsche deals with most specifically in *The Genealogy of Morals* and in the “We Scholars” section of *Beyond Good and Evil*. Finally, there are his political prescriptions and analyses of the future which are found most particularly in “Why I Am a Destiny” in *Ecce Homo*, in “What Is Noble” in *Beyond Good and Evil* and in much of the vast and disparate material which composes the *Nachlass*.¹

¹ I have worked from German editions, providing English translations with only minor variations from those of Walter Kaufmann, when available.

F. Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden*, herausgegeben von Karl Schlechta (München, Carl Hanser Verlag, 1954) (cited by vol. and page).

I have supplemented this with:

F. Nietzsche, *Werke*. Kritische Gesamtausgabe, herausgegeben von Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1967 ff.) (cited as *Werke*, vol. and page).

This should become the standard edition if finished. I have completed the *Nachlass* given in Schlechta with:

F. Nietzsche, *Die Entschuld des Werdens*. Two volumes, Ausgewählt und geordnet von Alfred Baeumler (Stuttgart, Alfred Kroner Verlag, 1956) (cited as Kroner, vol. number, page number, aphorism number).

F. Nietzsche, *Werke* (Leipzig, Naumann, 1896), Vols. IX–XI (cited as Naumann, vol. number).

Attempts to investigate Nietzsche on politics are few and generally not good. Best noted are:

K. Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche* (New York, Vintage), pp. 257, 260, 283–86.

F. A. Lea, *The Tragic Philosopher: A Study of Friedrich Nietzsche*, (London, 1957), pp. 295–99.

John E. McNees, *Nietzsche as a Political Philosopher*, Harvard University B.A. thesis, 1960.

Ch. Baroni, *Nietzsche Educateur* (Paris, 1961), esp. pp. 224–28.

K. Jaspers, *Nietzsche* (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1965), pp. 252–83.

W. Salter, *Nietzsche the Thinker* (ntp 1917), esp. pp. 70–83.

W. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche* (Meridian, 1964), part III.

Glen D. Robinson, *New Parables for the Modern Age: The Moral and Political Philosophy of Nietzsche*, Harvard University thesis, 1958.

Quite specific, but off base, is H. Kariel, “Nietzsche’s Preface to Constitutionalism,” *Journal of Politics* (May 1963), pp. 211–25.

Kariel misses the activist side of Nietzsche (p. 213) and tries to turn him into a sort of existential proto-Madisonian (p. 224).

Best are:

W. Arrowsmith, “Nietzsche on Classics and Classicists,” *Arion*, II, 4 (Winter 1963), pp. 2–31.

Hans Barth, *Wahrheit und Ideologie* (Zurich, 1961).

Hans Peter Hohn, *Die Metaphysische und Anthropologische Voraussetzungen der Politik bei Friedrich Nietzsche* (Inaugural-Dissertation zur Universität Bonn, 1959).

Part of this latter was made (by Nietzsche's executors) into the book known as *The Will to Power*. To prevent misunderstandings a few things should be noted. Due to a modern tendency to see the word "power" as designating "political" things, there is a natural temptation to read *The Will to Power* as Nietzsche's description of the world he was trying to build. Suffice it to note that since he repeatedly claimed that "all life was will to power," the notion is at least so catholic as to make its application to any particular state of affairs, past, present or future, overly restrictive.

There is also a tendency to view the book as somehow sequential to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and thus being a more "definite" statement of Nietzsche's thoughts. In fact, of course, it comprises aphorisms drawn from Nietzsche's notebooks of the last decade of his life. Whatever the book can communicate as a whole is therefore necessarily comrade to the rest of Nietzsche's writings. An interpretation of all or even a part of Nietzsche's work resting mainly on a differentiation of *The Will to Power* from the rest of his work must be considered wrong.

I

Ultimately, any understanding of Nietzsche's importance for political philosophy can only be accomplished in the context of an investigation of his views on the whole of the modern human condition. Even a preliminary account of this would be far beyond the scope of this essay: it would, in fact, presume much of this essay as common knowledge. I hope then to establish here *not* what the political philosophical import of Nietzsche's intentions is, nor why, as he claims in *Ecce Homo*, we are going to be forced to "change all our ideas about politics," but rather, and more mundanely, what Nietzsche *said* about politics and how he went about saying it. I will be concerned only incidentally whether or not Nietzsche was *right*, though I generally think he was.

It is not sufficient in such a task to simply give an index.² As with most other questions, Nietzsche's considerations fall into two distinct categories: one dealing with the Greeks, the other with contemporary Europe. Nor is this accidental: if Nietzsche finds himself the "last of the anti-political Germans," he also knew and admired the pre-Socratic philosophers as "genuine statesmen"; if he counseled would-be philosophers to stay out of politics entirely in Bismarck's Ger-

² For one see Hohn, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-75.

many, he also recognized as monumental historical models both ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy—hardly periods devoid of politics. In times of philosophical statesmen such as Thales and Empedocles, Nietzsche finds a unity of philosophy and politics. In modern times this union is dissolved. The reasons cannot concern us here; in the present, though, Nietzsche finds no “genuine philosophers” who are also “commanders and legislators.”³

If there is no union of philosophy and politics in contemporary times, there is also no central place in Nietzsche’s writings to which one might turn to find a summary of his thoughts on political questions. He addresses them now and again, in short asides, occasional paragraphs. Before proceeding to an investigation of the significance of this style two important facts must be noted. First, the most profound level of Nietzsche’s political thought will not be concerned with the erection of systems in the manner of classical theory. There can be no Nietzschean *contrat social* because the unity of philosophy and politics (the “dominating philosophy”) which would correspond to it does not (yet) exist. Nietzsche will rather be concerned to investigate the reasons it is no longer possible to live a political-philosophical form of life. Thus he will be only incidentally concerned with specific political happenings of his time. His ignorance of them is willful. On the surface it would appear ridiculous to consider Wagner a more important political figure than Bismarck; this valuation follows logically, though, as I shall attempt to demonstrate, from the deduction that since there is no active governing principle of philosophical authority, present-day political happenings are at the most unimportant.

Second, as the first essay in *The Genealogy* makes clear, moral systems and politics are co-determined. Since the very existence of moral categories depended on the desire to assert power over another group of people—and under slave morality to *control* and render them predictable—all morality is fundamentally a form of politics. It is possible to understand Nietzsche’s fulminations against modern politics in the same light as those against morality: given the nihilistic nature of modern valuation systems all attempts at asserting values whether in morality or politics must necessarily encourage the onslaught of nihilism. A short reflection of the consequences of the modern mixture of morality and politics and the ensuing ideologi-

³ BGE 211 II 676; cf. *Twilight* 39 II, pp. 1015–17.

cal conflicts that result should give one pause before condemning Nietzsche's attack on morality. He is saying that it is precisely the fact that morality and politics are of a necessity tied which makes modern politics so dangerous. As André Malraux has recently pointed out, Nietzsche understood far better than anyone else that the twentieth century would be the century of great ideological wars.

II

By placing the fragments of Nietzsche's analysis of modern politics against the backdrop of Greek politics, we can illuminate contemporary times by the light of a period in which there supposedly was a unity of politics and philosophy. The differences will reveal something about the changes since the Greeks. The problems of modern times can be best understood by comparing them with those of a more coherent time.

To say that modern politics is different from Greek politics is hardly a revelation. However, the precise *nature* of this difference is not readily apparent. Nietzsche evolves a method which he believes allows the investigator to focus on the essential differences; this approach he calls *genealogy*. It is the key to much of his thought and requires some explanation.

Nietzsche is doing more than simply recounting the history or even the historical logic of the development of politics from Greek times to the present. Hegel had performed the latter task. There are, perhaps, no more perfect museums of the monuments of thought than the *Philosophy of History*, the *History of Philosophy* and the *Phenomenology*. Such attempts were responsible, as Nietzsche had already argued in the early essay "The Use and the Abuse of History for Life," for the "historical sickness" which now afflicts European man. Genealogy, on the other hand, combines the use of the three kinds of history that Nietzsche identified in that early essay. It is "monumental" history in that it looks to the past for examples of how particular processes were carried out in a "healthy" fashion; it is "antiquarian" in that it seeks to re-create and preserve some of the elements which made those processes so healthy; and finally and perhaps most importantly it is "critical": it shows us what is responsible for how we arrived in our present state and what we will have to take into account to proceed from here on out. As a form of what Erik Erikson has called psycho-history, it might enable us to recover from the Greeks the essential quality of their experience and thus

bring a bar of judgment to our present culture. Most especially it is an attempt to give coherence and form to the Greek experience in order to allow it to resonate with contemporary times.

As a method, it is thus related in kind to the *principe* which Tocqueville sought to discover in America in order to educate a France he saw as about to undergo some of the same experiences. It is of the same cloth as the "ideal type" which Max Weber developed from immersion in historical data and which allowed him to render critical and scientific judgment about the phenomena of his time.

Such an approach is subject to a number of objections which must be mentioned before proceeding. Nietzsche sought in his first work to set off the role he saw for Wagner—the cultural regeneration of a people—against similar attempts by ancient Greek tragedians. His book *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* was immediately met with violent attacks both on his conclusions and his philology. To his vision of a dark potential of irrationality underlying all of Greek art and culture, the establishment philologists, led by the young Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, counterposed the Greece of Goethe and Winckelmann: "sweetness and light." Nietzsche's scholarship, especially his exegesis of Euripides, was mocked and derided.

Now recent scholarship has vindicated Nietzsche's central perception of the dark side of the Greek world. This, however, does not clear up the problem: the question is the method. As William Arrowsmith has noted: "For Nietzsche the job of the classical scholar was to construct something like a general field theory which could unify the crucial and complex features of Hellenic experience."⁴

The question which faces us here is the acceptability of such a procedure. Does it not reduce the writer to the level of more or less inspired guesses? Since Nietzsche selected those facts which he felt (or knew) made the most "sense," was he not dealing with history in so cavalier a fashion as to render his work scientifically useless? A full defense of the method would require another essay, perhaps more. I do believe it to be justified, in fact, the only justifiable manner of proceeding. Here

⁴ Cf. e.g., E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*; J-P Vernant, *Mythe et pensée chez les grecques* (Paris, 1966); B. Snell, *The Discovery of Mind* (New York, 1960); and Jaeger, Friedländer, Nilsson, etc. Generally see W. Arrowsmith, "Nietzsche on the Classics and the Classicists," *Arion* (1964, 1, 2, 4). The quote in this paragraph is in *Arion* 4, p. 9.

I can do no more than state in an embarrassingly presumptory manner the reasons why. Nietzsche was, I think, justified and correct in his understanding of fifth-century Athens insofar as that period *affects the present*. One should not forget that Athens is part of our history, and thus any understanding of it must include this particular fact and its significance. As a perhaps more accessible example, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber draws a portrait of Benjamin Franklin. The American becomes the type of the early Protestant *cum* capitalist. He is constantly deferring gratification, always worrying about consequences, incapable of living in the present. To such an etching an historian might object that Franklin had, after all, thirteen illegitimate children, and was, while in Paris at least, a notorious lecher and bon vivant—such hardly constitutes ascetic behavior. True; of course. But that Franklin had an uncounted bastardy or was attracted to the *belles dames* of Paris is *not* of significance to those who are interested in understanding capitalism. If capitalism is, as Max Weber thought it to be, a central fact of all of our existence now, then the facts about Franklin just referred to constitute part of what Marx once designated the “ash-heap of history.” As Weber with Franklin, so also Nietzsche with the Greeks. To quarrel with Nietzsche’s interpretation of the Greeks, one must *also quarrel with his understanding of modern times*. Again, a full defense can be made, but not in the scope presently available.

Even if one accepts the approach, one may well ask, “Why the Greeks, rather than the Persians, or Egyptians, or Goths?” The answer here is determined by the nature of the inquiry. For Nietzsche it is necessary, if our understanding is ever to help us to proceed out of the situation in which we find ourselves, to return to the origin of *European* politics: the Greek polis. This is required first because of its genealogical purity: it is after all the parent of most Western ways of thinking and speaking about things political. Second, it is of particular importance since the coming age is to be that of “great politics,” that is, concerned with Europe (eventually the world) as a whole. Greece is of particular genealogical relevance for this development since it relates to that which is properly European, not that which is French, Italian, German, etc. If Nietzsche were seeking to understand something about German politics, Greece would be of far less use to him. If one is to be European, “Who were the Greeks?” must be answered.

By engaging in such an analysis of Greek politics he can

extract a sort of "unified field theory" by which to judge the chaos of present-day Europe. It is important to insist here again on the critical nature of such a method of investigation. Nietzsche will attack the *manner* in which the Greek experience—partly due to historical accident, partly to some elements inside that tradition, partly to the very process itself—was assimilated into the Western political tradition. No simple history, no matter how technically perfect, could ever be of use to a modern-day political philosopher since it would merely reproduce the story. Genealogical analysis should allow one to learn, and will "move one to action."⁵

Instead of stressing the similarities potential, actual or imagined between this world and that of the Greeks, Nietzsche is concerned to show the differences, the lack of relation between our present world and politics and those of Attic Greece.⁶ Throughout his life Nietzsche learned from, fought with and expounded on the Greeks. But to think that they provide historical lessons for modern practice is to mistake an historical lesson for the genealogical. No more than did Tocqueville think that America was a pattern which France might *follow*, did Nietzsche think Greece was one which modern Europe should emulate. What the precise nature of the two civilizations was is the subject of much of the remainder of this essay.

⁵ U₂ preface.

It must be noted here that Nietzsche is not, as some others might advocate, "returning" to the Greeks. Such a path seems to me to be the one chosen by Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin and occasionally Sheldon Wolin. Their approach is to some degree to keep alive the historical intellectual tradition in as much purity as possible. Strauss goes back to the Greeks to get a "pure" approach to the problems of politics; Hannah Arendt finds lessons for the modern experience of the disintegration of authority. She envisages to some degree the same conditions arising again when authority disappears (immediately after the act of revolution, for instance) as existed during Greek times. Nietzsche on the other hand is not hoping to find real conditions in modern life which might correspond to conditions which existed at the times of the Greeks: the burden of the history we bear is far too great for this to be possible for him. Rather he hopes to create a bar of critical judgment: we will at least learn what we have to take into account. The tradition—glorious as it may be and certainly Nietzsche knew it as well or better than any of us—simply will no longer suffice. The patina of 2400 years of experience has made it simply impossible to return to "purity." See *Werke*, IV₁, p. 159, and below.

⁶ Kroner I, p. 28 #57. See Snell, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

III

The Genealogy of Greek Politics

The Polis: The Importance of Political Space

In the Greeks in general Nietzsche sees two important characteristics, which are reflected in his views on Greek politics. There is one level (usually called Apollonian) which presents itself as serenity. Behind this is a world of deep and dangerous (Dionysian) knowledge which must be refracted through Apollonian organization. Nietzsche was among the first to see through the then generally accepted opinion of Winckelmann and Goethe of the Greeks of "sweetness and light" to the dark and masked underworld. There is thus in Nietzsche's understanding of things Greek an affirmation both of the serenity and also of that which is terrible. In no fashion will Nietzsche ever downplay the violent and awful aspects of Greek politics: he thinks that the power and strength of the civilization rested to some considerable degree on this violence.

Nietzsche's notion of what healthy politics looked like in the polis cannot be comprehended without an understanding of the arena in which it took place. For the Greeks politics was an activity engaged in by those who had been liberated from the world of necessity.⁷ Political men thus were not under a constraint to use politics for their own private ends. Rather since they had escaped from this world, they were in fact under very few constraints of prudence. Except for certain unconscious preconditions (to be dealt with below) political men were basically free to express their non-necessary drives and ambitions in an arena with other people doing the same.

They did so, I mentioned above, in an arena. The particular relation of the political Greek to his polis is of prime importance. It formed the "horizon" which Nietzsche noted in an early essay as prerequisite for life and culture. "This is a general law: a living thing can only be healthy, strong and productive within a certain horizon; if it is incapable of drawing one round itself or too selfish to lose its own view in another's, it will come lifelessly or before its time to its end. Cheerfulness, a good conscience, belief in the future, the joy-

⁷ HAH i 439 I 666; "The Greek State" (GKS) III 279. My understanding of things Greek owes a debt here in addition to Nietzsche to H. Arendt, *The Human Condition* (New York); A. W. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility* (London, 1960); and the books cited in note 4.

ful deed—all depend in the individual as in a people, on there being a line which sets off the surveyable (*Übersehbar*), the clear from the unilluminated and dark." As Hannah Arendt has pointed out, "the polis . . . is not the city state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together for this purpose. No matter where they happen to be. . . . Action and space create . . . the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely the where I can appear to others as they appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living and inanimate things, but make their appearance explicitly."⁸

Nietzsche brings out the particular relationship that the Greek had to his city. The citizen existed *in* the city-state but not *for it*. This was in fact for Nietzsche its "essential characteristic . . . that it experiences itself *not* as a function [whether of monarchy or commonwealth] but as their meaning and highest justification. . . . Their fundamental faith simply has to be that society must not exist for society's sake, but only as the foundation and scaffolding on which a choice type of being is able to raise itself to its higher task. . . ."⁹

For such an unquestioned and unquestioning stance to be possible the language and mode of thought had to be highly integrated with the social institution of polis. Without sharing Vernant's attempt to minimize the difference between pre-Socratic and Socratic thought, I agree that "the birth of the polis and of philosophy are so tightly linked that rational thought must appear from its origins to be solidary with the social and mental structures that are proper to the Greek city. . . . When Aristotle defines man as 'a political animal' he underlines that which separates Greek reason from that of today. If homo sapiens is in his eyes a homo politicus it is that reason itself is essentially political." In the polis, therefore, there arose an extraordinary preeminence of speech over all other instruments of power. It remained the "daughter of the city" until, in Nietzsche's eyes, the actions and teachings of Socrates loosened the organic relation.¹⁰

This autochthonian relation of language and politics marks for Nietzsche the extraordinary distance which separates modern man from the Greek. The very characteristic of a strong

⁸ U₂ I 214; Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 177; cf. Vernant, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

⁹ BGE 258 II 728; cf. Snell, *op. cit.*, pp. 277 f., 244 f.; Adkins, *op. cit.*, Chapter IX.

¹⁰ Vernant, *op. cit.*, p. 131; III 765-66 (WP 437); cf. Snell, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-45.

group of men is their ability to name things from their own perspective. Such a use of language as a political instrument—albeit non-reflective—Nietzsche sees as the strength of this society.¹¹

The state was thus, in the best of Greek times, the arena where people competed, both physically as in the games and, more importantly, publicly through argument. It was never a tool which one used to compete; nor was language (or, more properly, rhetoric) a skill which one *learned from* someone else in order to win battles. The basis of Nietzsche's whole attack against Socrates and Euripides is that they make language (and virtue) into something which can be learned and taught by almost anyone. Socrates "holds virtue to be teachable."¹²

The pre-Socratic conception exemplifies a "healthy" relation between men and politics. Nietzsche sees the state as an Apollonian scrim by which dangerous chaotic Dionysian drives are transvalued into culture or, as shall be gone into below, exteriorized into warfare. For Nietzsche, then, the most important Greek political institution will be the *agon*—contest—in which the desire for domination is refracted in a healthy manner and political stability and continuity—the prerequisites for culture—are ensured.¹³ Due to the ongoing *agon* no one person can become the best and thus be able to determine by himself the categories of conflict. It is in this light that one should understand the passage laudatory of Plato in the early essay "Homer's Contest" where Nietzsche has Plato compare his achievements favorably to the best that others have done and *disavow* them; thus also Nietzsche's curious approval of ostracism: by preventing the best man from emerging it helped the health of the state.

For Nietzsche the Greeks are "*a priori* 'political men in themselves' and . . . history knows no second example of such a frightful unleashing of political instincts. . . . This

¹¹ GM i 4–6 II 774–78; Adkins has carefully traced the changing relations of word and object of Greek moral concepts. See Adkins, *op. cit.*, esp. Chapters VI–VIII; cf. Naumann IX, p. 279 "Der Genius hat die Kraft die Welt mit einem neuen Illusionsnetze zu umhängen."

¹² Naumann X, p. 125. Heidegger (*Nietzsche* [Neske Verlag, 1961], Vol. II, p. 71) has argued that the very word "category," the existence of which is necessary to permit Socratic discourse, derives from *kata agora*, to look down on the public place, hence to be outside the agora. Alasdair MacIntyre has, in his usual delicate manner, reminded me, however, that Liddell and Scott's authoritative Lexicon gives no support to this notion.

¹³ Kroner II, p. 369 #1041; Kroner I, p. 5 #8. Cf. Hohn, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

bloody jealousy of city to city, of party to party, the murderous greed of each little state . . . Whither does the naive barbarism of the Greek state point? What is its excuse before the tribunal: by the hand it leads a flowering woman, Greek society."¹⁴

What is important about and makes possible an occasionally awful political exuberance of the Greeks is the point mentioned before. The Greek state and politics do not exist *for* themselves. The state is not its own justification. It is rather the arena in which people compete and out of which higher culture and individuals emerge. It is a delicate situation; it will persist as long as no contestant is able (has the language and epistemological position) to identify himself with the whole arena. If someone can look down on the arena he is in a commanding position. He can, so to speak, *make* the categories and thus will enjoy a different relation of consciousness to them than do the other players. As long as the genealogical parentage of the state is hidden behind what Nietzsche refers to as the "veil of Isis," culture will flourish. The role of strong politics for Nietzsche is thus *to hide from consciousness the genealogical foundations of the state*.

The Institutionalization of Political Space

Along with the need for strong politics at the foundation of the state goes a requirement for continuity. Indeed, this is only natural; no matter how firm the foundations, without duration no culture can evolve. Nietzsche lays heavy stress on this necessity, to the point in fact of insisting that fathers without sons be denied full civic rights. "In the natural *bellum omnes contra omnes* society (*Gesellschaft*) cannot strike root on a scale larger than and beyond the reach of the family. . . ." Instead of the constant struggle necessary for survival in pre-political times the state (at least the Greek state) concentrates the outbursts so that, if perhaps more violent, they allow "in the pauses . . . for society, under the effect of that war now turned inwards and compressed (to grow) and flourish, so that when there come warmer days the shining blossoms of genius may show forth."¹⁵

In this understanding the state is fundamentally and always—if it is to be healthy—a communal institution, *eine Organismus*. It is *not* a simple collection of individualistic he-

¹⁴ GKS III 281.

¹⁵ GKS III 282; cf. GS III 279; on fathers and sons see HAH i 455 I 673.

roes, as Julius Binder tried to argue for the Nazis.¹⁶ In terms of politics then, no individual must feel himself outside of the polis and capable of using it to his own ends. He may have other ends—the “culture” Nietzsche wants is a form of psychological health—but inside the political space of the state, politics *happen*, they are not *used*.

Such a happy situation was maintained precariously throughout a period of Greek history by men who were artists, philosophers and statesmen: the pre-Socratics and the early tragedians are of the same cloth for Nietzsche. The *Oresteia* is a dramatic trilogy about social and political problems arising out of the change in moral consciousness. It ends with an integration of the two conflicting moral and epistemological views in a society which retains the integration necessary for communal health. As another instance, recognizing the dangerous disintegrative potentialities in the proliferation of the polis, Thales attempted a cultural unity of Greece by means of a political confederation.¹⁷ His failure, as will be shown below, was of capital importance.

This delicate ongoing *Aufhebung* can only be maintained through the efforts of men like Thales and Empedocles—“genuine statesmen,” as Nietzsche calls them. Without this continuing artistic effort, a number of antagonistic contradictions implicit in the notion of continuity take over.

Like all organized political power, the polis wants to maintain social and political configurations as they are. Such a stasis is hostile to the ongoing development of *Bildung*. In plays like the *Oresteia* and *Seven Against Thebes*, Aeschylus resolves this problem. But without the *continual* rebirth that such *lauter Staatsmänner* provide, the state, as the Apollonian element of the culture, constantly attempts to assert dominance over the Dionysian progenitor which it is supposed to refract into culture. To the degree that it succeeds, it selects a number of affects “through which the regularity of performance would be guaranteed. . . .”

Such a development constitutes the denial of the necessity of change. More immediately, it is an attempt to develop principles whereby some men in the state will begin to find agreeable that which is in fact disagreeable. The state generates then what we might today call a “false consciousness”: “that

¹⁶ J. Binder, *Nietzsches Staatsauffassung* (Göttingen, 1925), p. 39. This notion is fully criticized in Hohn, *op. cit.*, pp. 84–85.

¹⁷ *Werke*, IV, p. 194.

one should like to do disagreeable things.”¹⁸ In fact the necessity for continuity gives rise to a class structure: there develop two classes, one of “compulsory labor and one of free labor.” The organized power relationship between the two is “the strongest typical relation after the pattern of which other relationships are unconsciously formed.” As this becomes the central focus of the state, problems immediately arise.¹⁹

There occurs rapidly a transformation structurally parallel and analogous to those diagnosed in *The Genealogy of Morals*. The lower classes should have no reason to love the state. However, in relation to the ruling class they are weak and so must seek justification for what has happened to them. They then begin to form an attachment to that which is hostile to them. “Just as if a magic will emanated from them [the conquerors], the weaker forces attached themselves with mysterious speed changing wonderfully under the influence of the sudden swelling of that power-avalanche, under the charm of that creative kernel. . . .”²⁰

This had been the very basis of *ressentiment*. The lack of will on the part of the weak leads them to attach themselves psychically to the strong. Psychologically, this compensation was at the source of the genealogy of slave morality. Socially, it has important consequences. Such a development in the state allows the man who identifies in this negative fashion to evade responsibility. As slave morality makes men behave not as individuals but as parts, so the state through the division of labor now makes men do things contrary to their nature. The “huge machinery of the state quells the individual, so that he declines responsibility for that which he does. . . . Everything that a man does in service of the state he does against his own nature.”²¹ The necessary organization of a state makes people behave differently. “How does it happen that a great crowd will do things which the individual would never come to?—by the division of responsibility, of command and execution. Through the intervention of the virtues of obedience, duty, patriotism (*Vaterlandesliebes*). . . .”

¹⁸ III 631 (WP 889); cf. HAH i 474 I 684; cf. Hohn, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

¹⁹ HAH i 450 I 671; HAH i 439 I 666; cf. M. Pohlenz, *Freedom in Greek Life and Thought* (Dordrecht, 1966), pp. 8–9.

²⁰ GKS III 280. On this whole question see GM i, especially 7, 10–16. Cf. G. Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (Paris, 1962), pp. 127–36.

²¹ III 658; cf. III 698; HAH i 57 I 491.

Very much as slave morality requires the separation of will from action, of cause from effect as conceptual tools, so here the same separations become social tools.²²

Social organization and the state in particular thus generate for many people the behavior associated with slave morality. As time progresses, this tends to become all the people. Social organization is for Nietzsche consonant with morality and makes possible and acceptable severe divergences of power in society.

The Division of Labor and the Direction of Ressentiment

The division of labor is the main tool which the institutionalized state uses to ensure that its members act as parts and not complete human beings. It is "the principle of barbarians. . . . There are not divisible entities in an organism." The unreflective political unity which was the agora rapidly begins to disintegrate under the impact of the division of labor.

The individual person is encouraged to be personally irresponsible for his actions. Like the Euripidean character that he is, he can blame his actions on powers outside of himself. He can now act *for* the state since the political world is becoming a mechanism distinguishable from the individuals acting in it. (He can of course also *not* act for the state—the existence of the choice implied in the consciousness of "for" is the problem.) "Everything he learns in service of the state," says Nietzsche, "is obtained through the division of labor."²³

Through the division of labor the state fosters "imperfect but more useful individuals." Individuals can thus for the first time be considered in terms of their utility. It will be a short step to a consideration of the state itself as a source of useful power. In a division-of-labor society men are "inverse cripples"—one part of their skills becomes so magnified that in essence they become that part. The portion of their being that is not being "used" by the society is so alienated that, in Nietzsche's image, one needs a "magnifying glass" to vindicate the humanity of these "human beings who are nothing but a big eye, or a big mouth, or anything that is big."²⁴

²² III 365; cf. GM i 13 II 789–91.

²³ III 631; Kroner I, p. 4 #5.

²⁴ Z On Redemption II 393–94; cf. III 631. Compare K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I (New York, 1967), pp. 418–27.

In the midst of this development of the state in Greece, there intervened a set of historical events which speeded up the development of the division of labor and the slavely-moral state. The agonistic development of culture had been premised on the basis that no one person or state was in fact the "best." Foremost in this practice of politics was, as noted above, the encompassing political space which prevented people from standing outside the political myth and using the state to their own private ends. The victory the Athenians won in the Persian wars is seen by Nietzsche as the source of a most important change in orientation. Given that the danger had been so great and the Athenian victory so complete, Athens became convinced that political strength and predominance was the only thing they could rely on to maintain their supremacy and security. Out of the victory over the Persians grew up in Athens a new attitude toward politics. In the fragments *Wissenschaft und Weisheit in Kampfe* Nietzsche writes, "the spiritual domination of Athens hindered all reformation. One must think back to the period when this domination was not present: it was not necessary; it came first on the heels of the victory over the Persians, that is when it became a matter of physical power." After this even Aeschylus came too late to work anything but a holding action. Other reforming attempts such as those of Empedocles were kept from fruition by the development of Socratic epistemology. When all of this became a context it brought about "the foul theory that one could only attend to culture when armed to the teeth and wearing boxing gloves." Even Thucydides manifests this for Nietzsche by his belief that without the state men would tear each other apart.²⁵

This combination of natural development and historical accident was to move politics from an activity which gave rise to a healthy polis to an end in itself. Such objectification—parallel to and manifested by the Socratic revolution in epistemology—is a general disaster for all of Greek culture. Since the predominance was so total, no external enemies remained against whom the aggressions which the inner contradiction of the state was releasing could release themselves. Much as Freud was to point out later, when external object

²⁵ "Truth and Lie in Conflict" *Werke*, IV₁, pp. 184–85, 140, 332–33. See also *ibid.*, pp. 183, 193–94; Naumann X, p. 153. For supporting historical data see Pohlenz, *op. cit.*, p. 22 ff.

cathexis is impossible libidinal aggression is turned inward and results in neuroses and psychoses.²⁶

It is most important to keep in mind here, as elsewhere, that while Nietzsche sees the evolution of the Greek polis as following a certain ontological pattern, it is by no means in its origins inevitable. At a key moment the Persian wars give a different impetus and qualitatively changed the structural foundations of the Greek world. The importance of the specific historical occurrence shows that Nietzsche, contrary to Hegel, thinks that concrete human action is of prime importance in the course of human events. If such a realization opens a door of historical possibilities, it also withdraws from the historical process any notion of an inevitable dialectical logic leading to a better social condition. If things are to get better, then men will have to do it themselves (whatever that implies is, of course, not clear).

The objectification is a disaster for all of Greek culture. It also has far-reaching consequences for later political and social evolution. As the state becomes transformed from the *arena* of power into the *instrument* of power men arise, armed with Socratic abstractions and self-consciousness, who stand essentially outside the moral horizon of the community. Since most people who remain in the community necessarily forget the truth of the origin of their moral sentiments and get caught up in the inertia of their unexamined beliefs, those who possess self-consciousness will begin to manipulate the state for their own private ends and will identify with it only insofar as it serves and corresponds to their own instincts. "In considering the political world of the Hellenes, *I will not hide those developments of the present which I fear dangerous atrophies of the political sphere.* If there should exist

²⁶ An ancillary comment must be appended for the purposes of intellectual history. The concept is, of course, remarkably similar in dynamics to plans such as William James' "moral equivalent of war" and to similar attempts to set up harmless and even productive ways to drain off the "reservoir" of psychic energy. This was not in the long run Nietzsche's solution, no more than it was Freud's, but the analogy holds well here. For instance, "The English of today, who appear on the whole to have renounced war, adopt other means in order to generate anew those vanishing forces; mainly dangerous exploring expeditions . . . nominally undertaken for scientific purposes but in reality to bring home surplus strength from adventures and dangers of all kinds. Many other substitutes for war will be discovered, but . . . such a highly cultivated and therefore necessarily easily enfeebled humanity . . . not only needs wars, but the greatest and most terrible wars . . . lest by means of culture, it should lose its culture and its very existence" (HAH i 477 I 687-88).

men who through birth, as it were, should be placed outside the cultural (*Volks*) and state instinct . . . then such men will find their ultimate political aim to be the most peaceful coexistence possible of large communities, in which they will be permitted their own purpose without resistance."²⁷

Thus, for instance, in modern times, Nietzsche might admire Bismarck early in his life when he still thought an educational rejuvenation of German culture possible; he rapidly comes to perceive Bismarck as a new Alcibiades. His appreciation for Bismarck and Alcibiades is for their *skill*; never does he indicate that they had any role comparable to those which might have been reserved for the great Greek tragedians and the potentiality of Panhellenic culture. This is why Wagner and his new international culture is, despite his lapses into nationalism, a more important figure for Nietzsche. Much as Thucydides, Nietzsche thinks that as leaders both Pericles and Cleon had many faults; but truly responsible for the downfall of Athens is the stateless man, Alcibiades, who *uses* the state to his own end.²⁸

If the state is to be used, then it has to be made calculable. To risk its destruction in war would be dangerous: thus in modern times the promulgation of the doctrines of the "liberal optimistic" viewpoint have tended to take the antagonis-

²⁷ GKS III 282 (my italics); cf. *ibid.* 280-81.

²⁸ Letter to Gersdorff 16/2/68; to Rohde 19/7/70.

HAH i 453 I 672. Kroner II, pp. 426-27 #1174 ("Parliamentarism is his new means").

BGE 254 II 722. Nietzsche has an early admiration for Bismarck, during the period he hoped for an educational regeneration of German culture. He writes to Gersdorff 16/2/68 some months after the resolution of the Schleswig-Holstein crisis that "politics is now the organ of general thinking (*Gesamt Denkens*). . . . Bismarck makes me immeasurably happy. I read his speeches like strong wine." This is the period during which Nietzsche perceives Bismarck as trying to bring about the cultural unity of Germany. Later, though, he writes to Rohde (19/7/70) that the Franco-Prussian war is disastrous, and at the end of his life, with one foot already over the edge of insanity, to Burckhardt that he is "having William, Bismarck, and all anti-Semites shot" (6/1/89). This is why Wagner and his new *international culture* is, despite his occasional relapses into nationalism, a more important figure for Nietzsche. Cf. BGE 256 II 724; Naumann X, p. 402; III 529; "Homer's Contest" III 299.

The differences between Nietzsche and Bismarck are too strongly argued in Th. Schieder, *Nietzsche und Bismarck* (Krefeld, 1963), especially p. 29; and glossed over in H. Fischer, *Nietzsche Apostata* (Erfurt, 1931), especially pp. 18-23. For a similar analysis of Bismarck, see H. Kissinger, "Reflections on Bismarck: The White Revolutionary," *Daedalus*, Summer 1968. For material for a similar analysis of H. Kissinger, see *New York Times* 1969 ff.

tic quality out of war. The conscious competitive war is replaced with the mass movement, particularly susceptible to ideological manipulation.²⁹

When combined with the lack of responsibility also engendered by such a state the dangers become tremendous. Contrary to those who see in modern times the happy development of the autonomous individual, Nietzsche finds modern man not to be a "personality, but merely an atom (*Einzel*n). He represents all atoms against the communality. . . . He instinctively sets himself up with other atoms; what he fights, he fights not as a personality but as the representative of atoms against the whole." Already in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche had noted that we "live in a period of atomistic chaos."³⁰

As with all slave morality, the trend toward individualism is fostered by the desire to become like the strong. Such a person though is "weak and [an] extremely vulnerable piece of vanity and demands that everyone should be made equal: that everyone should only stand *inter pares*. . . ."³¹ This might possibly allow some petty vanities to be assuaged—in a civilized age almost everyone has some modicum of talent—but the basis of culture must necessarily perish. For everyone to become equal means for Nietzsche for everyone to become individualistically oriented toward their private gains and thus in the totality of their being be equally subject to the realm of necessity. Both of these are incompatible with the root of the agonistic prerequisite for culture and politics.

The consequence of this long development of the slavely moral state is quite clear for Nietzsche. There is a progressive *lessening* of politics. "The democratic movement is *not only a form of the decay of political organization*, but a form of the decay, namely the diminution of man, making him mediocre and lowering his value."³²

I can thus sum up the progressive evolution of the Greek political experience as follows:

1. culture depends on the existence of strong and agonistic politics;
2. such politics depends on the existence of the state;

²⁹ III 240 (WM 725); HAH i 441 I 667; Naumann X, p. 337.

³⁰ GM ii 2 II 801.

³¹ III 474; cf. III 820–24.

³² BGE 203 II 661; cf. Kroner I, p. 432 #1331. See also S. S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston, 1961), Chapters 9 and 10.

3. the state progressively tends to depend on slave morality for its existence;
4. the combination of slave morality and politics inevitably leads to a democratization of relations between classes and a decline of the agon;
5. the maintenance of institutions thus requires the growth of individualism;
6. democratization and individualism make culture possible;
7. this tends to further erode the possibility of strong politics;
8. the outcome is thus characterized by the *absence* of politics and of the public sense.

Such a sketch is an outline of the grandeur and decline of Athens. It is also meant of course to be a general sketch of any political relationship; as genealogy it contains lessons for any limited time span. From this examination of the Greek state, Nietzsche extracts lessons which will allow him to examine the genealogy of modern politics also.

IV

Modern Politics: Its Genealogical Prospectus

No point has been made more often than that Nietzsche has no coherent doctrine of modern politics. By this it is generally meant that he provides no political program, no comprehensive political analysis. As I mentioned in the introduction Nietzsche's political opinions are, like the politics of his day, in fragments. This as we now see must be so; there simply is for Nietzsche no accurate way to talk about politics today because—in genealogical perspective—there are none. Phenomenological description must remain atomistic, because of the absence of any unifying arena in which politics occurs and out of which new men and culture might arise. The one attempt Nietzsche made at providing a unified perspective *explicitly* on politics is probably the long section "On Peoples and Fatherlands" in *Beyond Good and Evil*. And yet this, to our confusion, is essentially a discussion of music. For a modern man the reason remains obscure even if a note from the period of *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* reminds us that "modern men maintain themselves towards music in the way that the Greeks did towards their symbolic myths."

Nonetheless it is possible to work out *how* modern politi-

cal phenomena manifest the genealogy which the Greeks formed and passed on. That is the main task of this section.

Nationalism: the Ascetic Priest of Politics

The above developments described a change in the relationship of the individual to the state. In a long section of *Human, All Too Human* entitled "Religion and Government" Nietzsche analyzes this change. As long as religion and politics were joined in the symbiotic unity that was typical of the polis religion provided "an attitude of tranquillity, and temporizing and confidence" during the inevitable crises which arose. Its antiquarian function ensured the continuity of the polis. Such religion, however, inevitably has an authoritarian and hierarchical basis and survives only with difficulty when equalitarian ideals spread. "When the state is no longer allowed to draw any use from religion or the people think too diversely on religious matters for the government to be able to adopt a consistent and uniform procedure with respect to them—the way out of the difficulty will necessarily present itself to treat religion as a private affair and leave it to the responsibility of each individual conscience and custom"³³

Christianity encourages this separation with the concept of "render unto Caesar" and is destructive of the unity of society. There is generated an immense number of sects, culminating in the hostility of the religious to the state and the overattachment of the irreligious. "Primitive religion as the abolition of the state . . ."³⁴ No matter who wins in these struggles, be it the religious through a form of more or less enlightened despotism, or the irreligious through education and schools, in the end it makes little difference. Reverence for the state is destroyed: "the utilitarian attitude is encouraged." Scrawled on the back of an envelope he received from Overbeck in March 1878, Nietzsche noted that "the decay of the religion is also the decay of the state."³⁵

The separation of the this-worldly state from the other-worldly religion that Christianity fostered is thus one of the main aspects that Nietzsche rejects about the Christian religion. He puns on their relation by linking *Christ und Anarchist* (Christian and anarchist). For Nietzsche Christianity is explicitly made possible as a form of existence: but only "as

³³ HAH i 472 I 680.

³⁴ III 659; see Wolin, *op. cit.*, Chapter 3.

³⁵ HAH i 472 I 681; the envelope is noted in *Werke*, IV⁴, p. 228.

the most private form of existence: it presupposes a narrow, remote, completely *unpolitical* society. . . ." The impossibility of combining in the present day and age Christianity and any public sense is underlined most strikingly in *Zarathustra*. The first person Zarathustra meets is a pious man who has not yet heard that God is dead. He is able to successfully lead a hermit's life, and Zarathustra allows him to go on doing so. He does not tell him that God is dead.³⁶ The social message is clear; implicit in Christianity and its liberal offshoots are elements which make society and the public weal impossible. Its epistemology endlessly destroys the horizons which make all culture and life possible.

This is Nietzsche in a very Burkean mode. Since illusion is necessary to all culture, if the Apollonian scrim is torn aside all is lost. Almost echoing Burke's notion of the "politic-well-wrought-veil" Nietzsche argues that "if religion disappears the state will inevitably lose its old veil of Isis and will no longer arouse veneration." Continuity, the necessary prerequisite for a strong culture, becomes impossible since people shy away from tasks which are not privately rewarding in the utilitarian sense.³⁷

This continues the disintegration of the public and political which was noted above. Men arise who stand psychically outside the state; it becomes merely the "ruling arm" of this class of people—mainly financiers according to Nietzsche. "In the end—one can say it with certainty—the doubting of all government and the insight into the useless and harassing nature of these short-winded struggles (between religion and the state) must drive men to an entirely new resolution to the abrogation of the concept of the state and the abolition of the contrast 'public and private.' *Private concerns gradually absorb the business of the state.*"³⁸

Though such a development constitutes the decay of the state, for the individual it leads no more than does slave morality to total annihilation. The decaying state resists disintegration through *nationalism*. This is essentially for Nietzsche a reactionary movement since, as the characteristic form of

³⁶ On the pun A 58; the citation is III 588 (WP 211); on Zarathustra prologue 2 II 278–79; cf. III 665; A 43 II 1205–6.

³⁷ III 822–24; see H. Birault, "En quoi nous sommes encore pieux," *Revue de métaphysique et morale* (Jan-Mars 1962), pp. 25–64, especially p. 64.

³⁸ HAH i 472 I 681–82. See also P. Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (New York, 1966), pp. 52–57. Cf. III 660; BGE 242 II 707–8; *Werke*, IV₂, pp. 414–15.

modern politics, "this arrogant conceit" focuses the interests of the individual on entities which prevent (much as Bismarck came to) the cultural unity of Europe. The gradual development in Europe of a "supra-national and Nomadic type of man" possessing great powers of adaption—this "evolving European"—receives great setbacks due to nationalism; in the end, however, this attempt will have exactly the same ironic reversal as socialism and anarchism: that of encouraging the decay of the state.

Nietzsche is not saying so much that nations and/or modern political entities are in themselves evil, but that they consist of evil sets of perceptions about the processes which are going on in the world. Nationalism allows people to avoid coming to terms for a while with the gradual disintegration of meaning—what Nietzsche formulated in the aphorism of the "death of God." It provides an artificial and "overly modest" meaning to life. It is thus an *epistemological disaster* logically analogous to the "innocent" and "guilty means" which the ascetic priest used to maintain moral life for the individual and to the pity which keeps Zarathustra from eternal return. The nationalistic state wants to be all, and provides only a very low-level form of association.³⁹

Thus, in *Zarathustra*, the nationalistic state is the "new idol," the "coldest of cold monsters" because it *follows* and is in fact made possible and encouraged by the death of God. Previously nihilism was triumphing in the name of a slavely-moral religiosity; now it triumphs under the banner of man. "The monster . . . detects you too, you vanquishers of the old god. . . . Your weariness serves the old idol."⁴⁰ Nietzsche sees as dangerously false the supposition dear to Kant and nineteenth-century liberals that once republicanism is freed from the fetters of feudal religiosity healthy states will spring forth. The intention of the unmasking is an attempt at pointing out exactly how little the psychological foundations of the state have changed in the last millennia. The transition to democratic rule merely encourages—to some degree even speeds up—processes which were already ontologically implied in the foundations of politics.

With the death of God, even the ascetic priest becomes part of the state. "For now accepting the belief that God has passed away, to the question 'who commands' my answer

³⁹ III 605; Z *The Convalescent* II 461–62; HAH i 436 I 665–66; cf. Z *The Sign* II 561; *Werke*, IV₂, p. 401; Hohn, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁴⁰ *The New Idol* II 313–14.

is: 'the herd commands.'" The state is the "coldest of cold monsters" because there is no creating will behind it, no public arena except the shadow of a dead God. No value framework can be provided. "Coldly it tells lies too; and this lie crawls out of its mouth: 'I the state am the people.' That is a lie! It was creators that created people and hung a faith and a love over them: thus they served life. It is annihilators who set traps for the many and call them 'state.'" Through such reification the state is the "slow suicide of life."⁴¹

Ultimately the failing of the modern state is the drain by democratization and nationalism of the potential sources from which creation of new values could come. Thus, for instance, justice: "The state as administrator of justice is a piece of cowardice because the great man by whom standards can be set is missing."⁴² There is no ruling class: at the most there is a *shepherd*—a person whose total identity emanates from the herd which he leads. The creative "class" of today has disappeared in Nietzsche's understanding beneath the relentless logic of concomitant genealogical developments, both moral and epistemological.

Such an ongoing democratization of social relationships implies a society where "everyone feels they have a right to every problem" and where "everyone may sit in judgment on everyone else." Such a situation is a denial of that political space which Nietzsche felt to be necessary to strong politics. In Greece, only certain people could sit in judgment on others—those who had access to the same agora. Men with other political moralities had no commensurable rights. Thus for Nietzsche, justice demands that "what is fair for one cannot by any means—for that reason alone—also be fair for others."⁴³ If everyone can judge anyone, there is no order of rank, no definition of alike and different, no friends or enemies, no *agon* and no consequent culture.

It might be objected, as does Henri Lefebvre, that socialism is a modern reaction against the individualizing tendency of the slave-morality state. Nietzsche sees this, however, to be a mistake. As the relation of individuals to each other becomes more and more atomistic—as the sense of the "*public*" diminishes—rationalistic comparisons between people arise.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*; cf. III 906.

⁴² III 426; cf. HAH i 481 I; HAH i 438 I 665; Plato has a similar account in *Statesman* 275; cf. WP 902.

⁴³ BGE 228 II 692; cf. BGE 212 II 678; my thanks to Robert Eden for reminding me of these passages.

This is the birth of the notion of equal rights: a notion which develops naturally and appropriately in a society operating on these premises. In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche notes that "the commonest man feels that nobility is not to be improvised and that it is his part to honor it as the fruit of protracted race-culture. But the absence of superior presence, and the notorious vulgarity of manufacturers with red, fat hands, brings up the thought to him that it is only chance and fortune that has elevated the one above the other; well then, he reasons to himself, let us in our turn tempt fortune and chance! Let us in our turn throw the dice—and socialism commences."⁴⁴

It is important to note three things about this analysis of socialism. First, though Nietzsche thinks of socialism as in part a *reaction* to the overatomization of society, he does not think of it as something qualitatively different. Socialism is merely the logical continuation of political developments which are characteristic of any society and of the Western world in general since the Peloponnesian war. He notes: "Socialism . . . grasps that, to attain anything one must organize oneself to a collective action, to a 'power.' But what it desires is not society as the purpose (*Zweck*) of the individual (*Einzeln*), but rather society as the *means of making possible many individuals*—this is the instinct of socialists about which they frequently deceive themselves. . . ." ⁴⁵ Socialism is the logical continuation of slave morality. All attempts such as socialism to cure the ills of society by reforming institutions are, then, bound to failure for they will be subject to the same genealogical ontology.

Second, it is a mistake to think that what Nietzsche is calling for is merely some aristocracy of noble producers. He sees rather as dangerous and false all attempts at moral valuation of modern social arrangements. In the notes for *Human, All Too Human* he observes: "When a lower worker says to a rich manufacturer 'you do not deserve your happiness' he is right; however, his conclusions from that are false. No one deserves his happiness, no one his unhappiness."⁴⁶

Last, Nietzsche sees in socialism contradictory elements. It is progressive in the sense that it furthers and hastens the

⁴⁴ GS 40 II 65–66; cf. III 474–75 (WP 783).

⁴⁵ III 605 (WP 784); cf. *Werke*, IV₃, p. 243.

⁴⁶ *Werke*, IV₂, p. 557.

tendencies toward leveling which must be accomplished before significant change can occur (a Marxist would say "sharpens the contradictions"). Socialism thus "maintains (*unterhalt*) men and brings to the lower classes a sort of practical-philosophical language. Thus far it is a source of strength of the spirit (*Kraftquelle des Geistes*)."⁴⁷ Despite the progressive tendency there is also a reactionary strand to socialism. Nietzsche sees, as did Tocqueville and Saint-Simon, that the modern democratic state has a concentration of power patterned on that of despotism and increased exponentially by the atomizing tendency spoken of above. It is thus the "fantastic younger brother of the decrepit despotism which it wants to bury; its efforts are thus in the deepest sense reactionary. It demands a fullness of state power, such as only despotism has had. . . . It wants the caesaristic power-state of this century, for it . . . wishes to be its successor. . . ." ⁴⁸

Generally, two points stand out. First, *the modern state represents the concretization only of slave morality*. "Where are the masters for whom [today's] slaves work?" One must not always expect the simultaneous appearance of the two complementary classes of society. The modern state manifests the disbelief in the possibility of great men. "At the bottom we are all herd and mob."⁴⁹

Second, *the nature of modern nationalism is to keep political life at a very low level*. The "innocent means" which the ascetic priests have at their disposal are probably represented by elections, national holidays, etc. . . . The guilty means—the "orgies of feeling"—we will examine below under great politics.

To assert, then, that Nietzsche attacks politics is to miss the key point. *This is not a specifically anti-political doctrine*. Nietzsche is the last of "the anti-political Germans" because he is opposed to what Germans call "politics." Germany manifests in its politics the same sickness as does the rest of society.

The main characteristic of the modern situation Nietzsche then sees very well as a nationalistic state in which people have little or no political relationship to the power concretized in the state. Most developments—even socialism—tend to further this power. I now turn to the development of this situation.

⁴⁷ *Werke*, IV₂, p. 579.

⁴⁸ HAH i 473 I 683–84.

⁴⁹ III 439; cf. III 412, 420.

The Politics of Entreacte

Nationalism is, as pointed out before, essentially a reactionary force. It does not want to return to something atavistic, but wants to stabilize the onrushing nihilism. "Owing to the pathological estrangement which the insanity of nationalism has induced, and still induces, among the peoples of Europe; owing also to the shortsighted and quick-handed politicians who are at the top today with the help of this insanity . . . owing to all this and much more that today simply cannot be said, the most unequivocal portents are now overlooked, or arbitrarily and mendaciously interpreted—that *Europe wants to become one*."⁵⁰ Nietzsche has perceived that the increased cultural, commercial and nomadic (with decreases in landholding) ties between peoples should lead to the ultimate destruction of nationalities.

At present, though, nationalism causes the isolation of countries from each other. This is what Nietzsche calls a *künstliche Nationalismus*—an artificial nationalism. It is artificial and temporary because it works counter to those forces which Nietzsche sees as unifying Europe—such as democratization. It requires "artifice, lying, force to maintain its reputations."⁵¹

It is temporary precisely because it is artificial. Its existence will depend on the continuing presence of the artificers—the commercial and social classes in whose interest such a situation is maintained. Here Nietzsche engages in an almost "Marxian" analysis of the basis of balance-of-power politics such as Europe knew in the middle of the last century. We found before that the evolution of men without state instinct (possibly analogous in Greek times to Socrates) led to the evolution of a system of large equipoised states. Nietzsche continues on in what might appear an atypical fashion. Behind these movements he sees those "truly international homeless hermits" who due to their lack of state instinct abuse politics as an apparatus for their own enrichment. "If therefore, I designate as the most dangerous characteristic of the political present the application of revolutionary thought to the service of a selfish stateless gold-aristocracy; if I conceive of the enormous dissemination of liberal optimism as the result of modern financial affairs fallen into strange hands, and if I imagine all evils of social conditions together with the necessary decay of the arts to have either germinated from that root or grown together along with it, one will have to pardon my occasionally

⁵⁰ BGE 256 II 724.

⁵¹ HAH i 475 I 685.

chanting a paean on war.”⁵² It is obvious that Nietzsche is disturbed by the existence of men who have no loyalty to any group or rank order. Such men would seem to represent the ultimate logical development of the position that Socrates occupied vis-à-vis Athenian society. However, they cannot propose a morality of any kind: they are perhaps the ultimate nihilistic epigoni of the great Athenian.

It does not appear that Nietzsche ever followed up such considerations. What he is saying is something quite important. Nationalism seems to be a direct result of social democratization. He sees a situation where people whose loyalty is only to money manipulate such nationalistic feeling for their own ends. Such men have no political, only economic loyalty. This is in fact pretty much the situation that Lenin diagnosed in *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Contrary to Lenin, Nietzsche does not think that finance capitalism and its concomitant nationalism is the source of the great wars of the twentieth century. They are rather a restraining force in themselves. Great wars have at their origin something else; this is the problem of great politics.

Certainly more interesting is the notion of war as the possible solution to the problems engendered by the brake of nationalism. Just as Greece had its wars, so must Europe now recover in the form of “great politics” those antagonisms which might permit a cultural rebirth. “Nationalism, this *nervrose nationale* with which Europe is sick, this perpetuation of European particularism (*Kleinstaaterei*), of small politics [has] deprived Europe of its meaning, of its reasons—(has) driven it into a dead-end street. Does anyone besides me know the way out of this dead-end street?”⁵³

The way out is a daring gamble: great politics. Only this might lead to conditions permitting a cultural rebirth. Like most other things in Nietzsche, due to its genealogical structure, great politics begins by making things worse before it might make them different. On one level, then, great politics means international politics. This reinforces the nationalism characteristic of the modern state and binds people, especially strong creative people, to the state; it also furthers the progress of nihilism. For instance, Nietzsche fears that the youth of nations will be drawn into the vortex of such politics. Its most dangerous consequences are not the cost or the “public hecatombs” but rather that “the political growth of a nation almost

⁵² GKS III 283–84; cf. *Werke*, IV, 2, pp. 414–15.

⁵³ EH The Case of Wagner 2 II 1148.

necessarily entails an intellectual impoverishment and lassitude, a diminished capacity for the performance of works which require great concentration and specialization."⁵⁴

On this level, the balance of power, which Nietzsche saw as profiting the stateless men, will be upset. Specifically identified are the "blood and iron" politics of Bismarck. Bismarck is trying to prevent the spread of individualism—much as Wagner was in *Parsifal*. The judgment of Th. Schieder seems a little harsh, perhaps motivated by the fact that monographs must make points: "Bismarck is in one word all that against which Nietzsche flung his lightning, which he hated and which he wanted to expose as decadent."⁵⁵ Nevertheless there is little doubt that Bismarck is—in terms of his international system—fighting a rear guard action, which while temporarily preventing unity from coming about, ultimately will encourage it. There will be a gradual perishing of morality: "the great spectacle in a hundred acts reserved for the next two centuries in Europe—the most terrible, the most questionable, and perhaps the most hopeful of all spectacles. . . ." Europe is presently undergoing this, *but in an uneven way*: some nations are "ahead" of others. "The sickness of the will is spread unevenly over Europe; it appears most strongly and most manifold where culture has been at home the longest . . . in France. In Russia . . . the strength to will has long been accumulating and stored up; there the will—uncertain whether to be a will to negate or a will to affirm—is waiting to be discharged."⁵⁶

The argument seems to imply that it is only when all nations in Europe have reached the same far stage of individualism will the final transformation away from petty politics be possible. "The next century will bring the fight for the dominion of the earth—the compulsion to great politics."⁵⁷ Just as with the will to power and morality, political change comes about through the search for justification. "The leveling process of European man is the great process which should not be checked: *one should even accelerate it*. . . . The leveled species requires, as soon as it is attained, justification. . . ."⁵⁸

⁵⁴ HAH i 481 I 690; cf. HAH i 442 I 667–68.

⁵⁵ Th. Schieder, *op. cit.*, p. 29. Cf. BGE 254 II 722; III 529.

⁵⁶ On the "spectacle": GM iii 27 II 899; on "unevenness": BGE 208 II 671–72. Cf. the remarkably similar analysis in Marx's "Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right."

⁵⁷ BGE 208 II 671–72.

⁵⁸ III 521.

Nationalism and such developments are things which impede the justification function of the will to power by trying to maintain politics at a very low level.

On the other hand, conscious of the need for a new "politic well wrought veil," Nietzsche also thinks that the struggle for the dominion of the earth must come about at the *right time*—when there exists a group of new men who can put it back together again. Since state and society are "regarded as sub-structure" for the new society and "education conceived as *breeding*,"⁵⁹ the attempts on the part of socialists to rush to the final revolution are particularly dangerous. They want to "set one's hand to the plow when no one can show us yet the seeds that are afterwards to be sown on broken soil."⁶⁰ What is needed *first* is "a higher species of men which thanks to their preponderance of will, knowledge, riches and influence will use the democratic Europe as their most suitable and supple instrument to take the destiny of the world in their hands and work on 'men' as artists. Enough; time is come for us to transform all our views on politics."⁶¹

There seems to be a danger that we engage in the "guilty means" of great politics without philosophers to rebuild the arena; if so, the situation would really wind up in a worse state than previously. The ascetic priest triumphed in morality only because all other values were lacking. A similar triumph in the social-political sphere by nationalistic and ideological tendencies could possibly spell a common disaster. Nationalistic states each inevitably beset with the anxiety due to the inward-turned aggressive tendencies will tend to feel that the other states are responsible for its discontents. It would then follow that the elimination of the others is all that is keeping the world from being peaceful. This is the fallacy which Nietzsche wished to expose when speaking of "liberal-optimistic" doctrines; it follows for nationalistic states also.⁶²

It is this ideological war—the last desperate attempt to link modern slave-morality politics and religion in a now disastrous union—that frightens Nietzsche. It is not only inevitable, but men are desperately unprepared for it. "When truth enters into a fight with the lies of the millennia, we shall have upheavals, a convulsion of earthquakes, a moving of valleys and mountains, the like of which has never been dreamed of. The con-

⁵⁹ III 505.

⁶⁰ HAH i 472 I 683.

⁶¹ III 505.

⁶² GM iii 28 II 899; *Werke*, IV₁, p. 251.

cept of politics will have entirely been merged with a war of spirits (*Geisterkrieg*); all power structures of the old society will have been exploded—all of them are based on lies: there will be wars the like of which have never been yet on earth.”⁶³

Thus there seems to be a danger that were man to engage in the “guilty means” of great politics without philosophers to redraw the horizons, the situation would merely wind up being worse. We must remember that the ascetic priest triumphs only because *all other ideals are lacking*. “All attempts made to escape nihilism without transvaluing all previous values only make the matter worse; it brings about its opposite.”⁶⁴ This seems to be the second understanding of great politics. It presents both more possibilities and more dangers. Basically it is an attempt to redefine horizons, to escape from the nihilism which pervades the culture more and more. What Nietzsche seems to fear is what Hermann Rauschning, already a disillusioned ex-Nazi in 1939, called “the Revolution of Nihilism.” Revolution does not imply for Nietzsche, as it did for Marx, transvaluation.

In the end, this is one of the main points of Nietzsche’s argument against the moral point of view. In slave-morality cultures one must inevitably judge and take one’s standard in comparison with other peoples. Thus two cultures or polities claiming different moralities will inevitably conflict with each other. The conception of international politics as the Hobbesian war of all against all acquires progressive truth as history moves on: only in modern times, Nietzsche realizes, has the disappearance of political space between cultures begun to manifest itself in its barbaric fullness.

To fully understand the process of transvaluation an investigation of eternal return would be necessary. This is beyond the scope of the present essay. It is possible, though, to say something about how Nietzsche thinks politics will look during the interim period.

In the first place, the coming period of great wars engendered by nihilism (not by nationalism) is seen by Nietzsche to be “good” only under one circumstance: if it makes possible new forms of life. If it comes without the “overdetermination” of “new men,” all will be in vain. Second, this implies something about political consciousness. The problem with modern political men is that the realms of their consciousness have

⁶³ EH Why I am a destiny, i II 1152–53.

⁶⁴ GM iii 28 II 899; III 621.

expanded so far and so abstractly that politics is no longer a *public* matter: it is no longer the subject of a common consciousness. As long as men continue to have this kind of problem with consciousness they are not going to be able to draw the veil of illusion which allowed for great culture over others, let alone over themselves. As Hannah Arendt put it, "To look upon politics from the realm of truth . . . means to take one's stand outside the political realm."⁶⁵ To which one must only add that if truth has destroyed itself, the political realm must fall away also.

Philosophical truth concerns man in his singularity and is apolitical by nature. On the other hand, politics is necessary for higher culture. Therefore what we need are new philosophers. It is not possible to solve the problems of consciousness on the social level. This is true by definition, as we have seen. If someone could *das Sein neu gründen*, to use Heidegger's phrase, and overcome the problems of self-conscious slave morality, the foundations for a new culture might be possible. The "solution" as described here looks somewhat like that of *Die Meistersinger* without the juvenile self-doubts of Walther, nor the occasionally rather tired cynicism of Sachs. Nietzsche notes a danger that the age of ideological politics will simply go on more and more destructively, that there will be no *creative* destruction. This *cannot* come through the "negation of a negation"—such only are priests and nationalism. They are parasites on decadents.

V

Politics: Midnight and Midday

Nietzsche wishes to launch Europe on an experiment; it is necessary to precipitate a necessary, but perhaps fatal contest for the domination of the earth which may, *just* may, have as its consequences the emergence of a new rank order and a new culture. He realizes that unless the wars which are *necessarily* going to be fought in the twentieth century are fought to bring about this new world, that nothing, or anything may happen. The wars will be fought anyhow: the new "veil of Isis" requires philosophy and philosophers and they do not seem to be forthcoming. (The doctrine of eternal return is designed, though, in Nietzsche's view, to make philosophy possible once more.)

⁶⁵ Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Politics" in *Between Past and Future* (New York, 1969), p. 259.

Almost anything is going to be possible: the increasing disintegration of society itself creates the preconditions which make new worlds conceivable. Two factors appear especially prominently.⁶⁶ Through their mastery of the world men are increasingly able to produce the conditions under which they affect the world. Though Nietzsche does not see this as an unmixed blessing as Hegel did at the end of the *Phenomenology*, he does see it as a new characteristic of modern times. Second, the change occurs in a situation where society is no longer perceived as its own justification. Men and women can require something else.

How any transformation would come about given the difficulties described above and what such a transvaluation would look like cannot be gone into in this space. Nietzsche's doctrine (not theory) of eternal return is in fact the understanding of how a new (world) arena might come about. I would merely like to note here how difficult this will be through a contrast of this notion with the apparently quite similar notions of Hannah Arendt.

In her view, the cyclical nature of certain processes manifests itself in their "eternal recurrence" at certain moments in the development of any system of relations. For instance, when authority disintegrates—as in revolution—men reassert a fraternal political bond, which she believes can best be understood by looking to Greek thought for a description. Similarly the present "failure of nerve" in the United States may very well generate a reassertion of the Tocquevillean *principle* which underlies the country.

This is not the time or place to criticize this view at length. Rather, I simply want to point out that it is very different from that of Nietzsche. He simply does not believe that under the growing chaos is anything eternal which might repeat itself. The crisis extends—this is why it is so profound and its consequences so potentially radical—to their "infrastructure" itself. In fact, it springs from the nature of the infrastructure. There is thus literally nothing in the configuration of modern events which might by recurrence generate health.

Thus, for Nietzsche the development of a society which is not its own rationale and therefore does not permit of a nihilistic self-consciousness must come from or at least be co-equal with the appearance of men who do not share the ontological problems of the present men and their society. It

⁶⁶ The following analysis is influenced by Heidegger, *op. cit.*, and P. Klossowski, *Nietzsche et le cercle vicieux* (Paris, 1968).

appears, then, that those commentators who have chosen to ignore Nietzsche's lengthy comments about "breeding" and "race" are ignoring what Nietzsche himself found to be a central portion of his thought. No positive social doctrine can come out of Nietzsche without such an appreciation. Again there is not sufficient space here to deal with this matter adequately, but a short attempt can be made.

Nietzsche feels, as noted above, that whatever is done will have to be done on a much larger scale than before. As shown above, the increasing democratization of people's relationships make this possible. "Each natural process of the cultivation of mankind . . . which until now was operating slowly and unguidedly could be taken into hand by men; . . . *whole portions of the earth can dedicate themselves to conscious experiments.*"⁶⁷

Interestingly enough this means that Nietzsche thinks the possibilities of guided social change to be far greater in advanced industrial societies—providing only that there are the men to undertake them. Societies less along the path toward democratization—or perhaps escaping from the Western flow altogether—will be less subject to such conscious experimentation.

As examples only two come to mind in the present: China and Cuba. Neither of them is, however, as much developed along the path to atomistic individualism as many others. They do both have self-conscious rulers and are dedicated to the very Nietzschean proposition of creating "new men." One might look below the surface nonsense of the "creative application of the thought of Mao Tse-tung" to understand the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution as an epistemological revolution designed to induce in the Chinese people the attitude that nature can be mastered through abstract thought, rather than (as in the Confucian mode) bent before like a reed. What the ultimate outcome of this will be is hard to say. The problem is far more difficult in advanced industrial societies which are in many ways just coming out of the organizational period that China and Cuba are entering. Nevertheless the possibility in these countries should raise similar questions about those in more technological ones.

Therefore man has much the same situation in politics as in morality. The development of the political has made it more abstract and removed from the life of the individual. This was

⁶⁷ Kroner II, pp. 370-71 #1044.

also what had happened with morality in the death of God: that which had been a sensuous force is now but a hollow shell. The shell is, however, kept from breaking in and out of its own logic. In morality the preserver had been the ascetic priest. In politics it is nationalism.

However, this residue is at the same time all that is important in governing man's life. The ascetic ideal is, because of its totalitarian logic, the *only* ideal which governs men's lives. Nationalism is a similar residue in politics and is also the *only* form of politics. Thus it totally shapes the political life of man. Worst of all it prevents new genius—true philosophers—from emerging.

Men are confronted with a startling paradox. Kierkegaard points out already in 1847 that in the future what is important for the individual cannot be politics, "for politics is a dialectical relation between the individual and the community; but in our times the individual is in the process of becoming far too reflective to be able to be satisfied with being merely represented." Yet at the same time, as Mann puts it, "the destiny of our times manifests itself in political terms." It is as if the two parts of the Aeschylean assertion that character is destiny had been separated by modern political developments. Those things which deal with a man's character no longer have any relation to his destiny. The democratization and atomization involved in the modern political form of nationalism mean that men's lives get shaped by abstract forces to which they can only react. Since this effectively dominates their lives, true creativity such as was possible with the strong personal sensuous political life of the Greeks is impossible.

Never has politics been so important; but never has it been so remote. For Nietzsche, in opposition to Marx, the solution to this dilemma must *first* be individual, and only then social. Societies no longer have their own revolutions out of their own logic: now history and the dialectic lead us only downward.

NIETZSCHEAN PSYCHIATRY

MITCHELL GINSBERG

When we do call a child happy [*eudaimon*], we do so by reason of the hopes we have for his future. *Nich. Eth.*, 1100a3.

I want, once and for all, *not* to know many things. Wisdom sets limits to knowledge, too. *Twilight I 5*.

Nietzsche is typically viewed—with the hindsight and horse blinders of the “historical perspective”—as a precursor of Freud.¹ As having a precocious, instinctively accurate but not fully articulated, unsystematic grasp on key Freudian concepts. To add definition to the usual impressionistic image, I will draw attention here to (1) the unconscious *and* its relation to *Unlust*-bearing [unpleasant and stronger] material, (2) repression, (3) internalization, (4) sublimation, (5) projection, (6) the ego, (7) overdetermination, as well as to (8) the notion of society as in conflict with and domesticator of the individual, (9) the contrast between a quantum of (psychic) energy and the particular manner of its discharge, and to (10) dreams as manifestations of the person.²

This essay was written especially for this volume.

¹ Contrast esp. K. Jaspers, *General Psycho-Pathology*, “Excursus into Psychoanalysis” (in §5 of Ch. 5), where psychoanalysis is seen as having *blocked* the direct influence on psychopathology of such greats as Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. References to Freud’s works by date and letter (e.g., 1915d) are in accordance with the conventional system, as used in the bibliographies of the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, J. Strachey ed., London: Hogarth Press, 1953. This edition will be referred to as SE, by volume and (in some instances) page, e.g., SE 10, SE 14: 125 ff. The parallel passages will also be cited in Freud’s *Gesammelte Werke* (GW), London: Imago, 1940–52, and, when applicable, in his *Collected Papers* (CP) London: Hogarth Press, 1957.

² To compare Nietzsche and Freud concretely, consider for example: (1) ZIII 13, “Up, abysmal thought, out of my depth! . . . You are coming, I hear you . . . Come here! Give me your hand! Huh! Let go! Huhhuh! Nausea, nausea, nausea—woe unto me!” and “The Unconscious” (1915e) [in SE 14 = GW 10 = CP 4]. (2) BGE 68, “‘I have done that,’ says my memory. ‘I cannot have done that,’ says my pride, and remains inexorable. Eventually—memory yields,” and “Repression” (1915d) [in SE 14 = GW 10 = CP 4]. (3) GM II 16, “All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inward*—this is what I call the *internalization* of man,” and “Analysis Terminable and Interminable” (1937c) [SE 23: 244 = GW 16: 90 = CP 5: 348], “we assume that, in the course of the development of human beings from their prim-

Thus it is suggested that Nietzsche deserves some of the credit and glory now wrongly granted to Freud. This, I think, would actually have pleased Freud, a great admirer of Nietz-

itive state to civilization a considerable part of their aggressiveness is internalized or turned inwards." (4) HAH II 95, "and those innumerable many who *miss* love from their parents or children or lovers, particularly people of subliminated sexuality, have struck gold [*haben ihren Fund gemacht*] in Christianity," and "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914c) [SE 14: 94 = GW 10: 161 = CP 4: 51], "Sublimation is a process that concerns the object-libido and consists in the instinct's directing itself towards an aim other than, and remote from, that of sexual gratification; in this process the accent falls upon the deflection from the sexual aim." (5) A 16, "A people that still believes in itself . . . projects its pleasure in itself, its feeling of power, into a being [its own god] to whom one may offer thanks . . . [W]hen a people is perishing, when it feels how its faith in the future and its hope of freedom are waning irrevocably, . . . then its god *has to* change, too," and "Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams" (1917d) [SE 14: 232 f. = GW 10: 423 f. = CP 4: 148], "To be thus able not only to recognize, but at the same time to rid himself of, reality is of great value to the individual, and he would thus wish to be equipped with a similar weapon against the often merciless claims of his instincts. That is why he takes such pains to *project*, *i.e.* to transfer outwards, all that becomes troublesome to him from within." (6) Dawn 115, entitled *The so-called "ego" and The Ego and the Id* (1923b) [in SE 19 = GW 13]. (7) GM II 14, "The list [in GM II 13] is certainly not complete; it is clear that punishment is overdetermined [*überladen*] by utilities of all kinds [including important psychosocial ones]" and *Studies on Hysteria* (1895d) [in SE 2 = GW 1], where Freud uses both the term *überdeterminiert* (at SE 2: 263 = GW 1: 261) and *überbestimmt* (at SE 2: 290 = GW 1: 294). (8) Twilight VII 2, "in menageries . . . beasts . . . are weakened, they are made less harmful, and through the depressive effect of fear, through pain, through wounds, and through hunger they become sickly beasts. It is no different with the tamed man whom the priest has 'improved,'" and "Why War?" (1933b) [SE 22: 214 f. = GW 16: 26 = CP 5: 286], "The process is perhaps comparable to the domestication of certain species of animals and it is undoubtably accompanied by physical alterations . . . The psychical modifications that go along with the cultural process are striking and unambiguous. They consist in a progressive displacement of instinctual aims and a restriction of instinctual impulses." (9) GS 360, "The first kind of cause is a quantum of dammed-up energy, which waits to be used in any which manner and direction; the second kind when measured against this energy is totally insignificant, at most a small accident according to which this quantum 'releases' itself in only one, particular way: the match in comparison with the powderkeg," and "The Neuropsychoses of Defence" (1894a) [SE 3: 60 = GW 1: 74 = CP 1: 75], "among the psychic functions there is something which should be differentiated (an amount of *affect*, a sum of *excitation*) . . .—a something which is capable of increase, decrease, *displacement and discharge* . . . We can apply this hypothesis, which by the way already underlies our theory of 'abreaction,' in the same sense as the physicist employs the conception of a fluid electric current" (emphases added; cf. the notions of libido and cathexis). (10) W&S 194, "Our dreams . . . transcribe our

sche's writings³ who elsewhere wrote about *another* precedent to his thinking that "I am very ready to give up the prestige of originality for the sake of such a confirmation, especially as I can never be certain, in view of the wide extent of my reading in early years, whether what I took for a new creation might not be an effect of cryptomnesia."⁴ This juxtaposing of Freud's and Nietzsche's somewhat parallel thoughts also suggests that Freud might be seen as developing ideas nascent in Nietzsche. History as riverine self-development.

All of this is very neat and thus, following Twilight I 26, suspect. What is some of the history of these notions? Looking around, we first note (to *start* small) that the notion of the ego is *not* something that Freud claims to have gotten from Nietzsche via Georg Groddeck, a physician. Rather, the notion of the id *is*: Freud refers to Nietzsche's use of the German *das Es* and to Groddeck, passingly, in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*⁵ and elsewhere, with a brief explanation of the notion.⁶ (Cp. the term in BGE 17 with the notion already expressed in Dawn 120.)

As for the term "ego," there are superficial complications in that it is the English translation (using the Latin word) of the German *Ich* ("I"). This special use of the usual first person singular pronoun did *not* originate with Nietzsche, but was in use in the psychological literature of the nineteenth century, in such writers as J. F. Herbart and W. Griesinger. Although Nietzsche used not only this by then common term *das Ich* (Dawn 281, BGE 16, Twilight III 5) but also *das Selbst* (HAH I 274, GS 60) and even (Dawn 516, GS 23) the Latin *das ego*—with the first letter *e* not capitalized, to indicate the noun's being foreign: cp. *ein décadent* (Twilight II 3), *eine contradictio in adjecto* (Twilight I 23)—Freud took *das Ich* as the parallel to the equally quotidian but appropriate *das Es*. (Cf. the discussion about Mary Barnes, below.)

experiences or expectations or circumstances with poetic boldness and definiteness" and *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900a) [SE 4/5 = GW 2/3]. In addition to these ten we might also consider others cited by Paul Federn in the discussion about Nietzsche held by the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society on April 1, 1908: see the first volume of the *Minutes*, edited by Hermann Nunberg and Ernst Federn. And cf. *infra*.
³ Cp. "An autobiographical Study" (1925d) [at SE 20: 60 = GW 14: 86] and *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901b) [at SE 6: 146 n. = GW 4: 162 n.].

⁴ "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" (1937c) [at SE 23: 245 = GW 16: 90 f. = CP 5: 348].

⁵ (1933a) [at SE 22: 72 = GW 15: 79].

⁶ *The Ego and the Id* (1923b) [at SE 19: 23 = GW 13: 251].

The status of the notion of the unconscious is *slightly* more complicated in that, to begin with, there are now several notions going by this same term, involving different contrasts. Overlooking, e.g., the term "unconscious" in a "topological" or "systematic" sense, let me lay aside the contrast of (a) unconscious as not in fact in consciousness at the moment—this includes what Freud calls the preconscious—with (b) unconscious as not possibly in consciousness at the moment—which *excludes* the preconscious. I will not get into the significance of this "possibly" here. Still another contrast, which is relevant here, is that of unconscious as a descriptive notion with that of unconscious as a dynamic one.⁷ Historians who attempt to trace the notion (as if there were *one* notion) of the unconscious—some back to Plato, but others back at least to the use by Paracelsus of the term *unwüßende* in his *Von den Krankheiten, so die Vernunft berauben* (1567)—can be seen as pointing out that it has long been realized (by *some*, at *various* earlier ages) that consciousness is not a necessary attribute of an idea: as Nietzsche notes about Leibniz. (GS 357. His term here rendered as "idea" is *Vorstellung*—idea, presentation, representation, etc.) Such attempts see unconsciousness as a descriptive equivalent variant of something mental which is not in consciousness. There remains, however, the notion of the *dynamic* unconscious: that what is *not* in consciousness is not always so by virtue of mere happenstance, but rather as a function of an *active* mental (but not phenomenological) process. *This* notion can also be traced from Freud to Nietzsche, but it too has a larger history. The German thinker Johann Friedrich Herbart, e.g., theorized in the first half of the nineteenth century that ideas *compete* for entry into consciousness, that some are not strong enough to defeat their opponents and consequently remain out of consciousness. He felt that they nevertheless continued to exist, and influenced the consciousness in various ways. (See Herbart's *Lehrbuch zur Psychologie*,⁸ Section 36.) Nietzsche and Freud both refer to Herbart in their writings, and Nietzsche takes a Herbartian view in suggesting that at present we are only conscious of the outcome of the battle between instincts (*Trieben*), in GS 111.

And Wilhelm Griesinger, in a work once used as a textbook for doctors and students, *Die Pathologie und Therapie der*

⁷ *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1933a) [at SE 22: 70–72 = GW 15: 76–78].

⁸ In, e.g., his *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5.

psychischen Krankheiten (1845), talks of *Vorstellungscomplexe* (idea complexes—cf. Hume's "bundles of ideas") which are "completely repressed (forgotten)" (Sect. 31). In this context I might also mention the work of Carl Gustav Carus, Edouard von Hartmann, Gustav Theodor Fechner, Hermann Ludwig von Helmholtz, etc.

All of this, however, merely suggests that a cursory glance at Freud and Nietzsche will show little of the larger intellectual history of which they form a part: onflowing history as a river and not a stream.

II

With this apparent neatness still an unswallowed lump, I have been listening to Nietzsche (not at all solely) with an ear to issues about psychotherapy. This has opened up a new aspect of the Nietzsche-Freud (intellectual) relationship.

After an initial period of starry-eyedness over Nietzsche's heritage to Freud (cf. HAH I 554), I began noticing such un-Freudian-sounding remarks as W&S 297: "*Not to wish to see prematurely*. As long as one is experiencing something, he must surrender himself to the experience and close his eyes, thus not to become *therein* an observer. *That* would disturb the good digestion of the experience: instead of wisdom one would obtain indigestion." The comparisons between this idea of *not* seeing too soon and (1) not swallowing, (2) the contrast between (a) decadence and (b) the ability *not* to react and Russian fatalism, (3) the growth of wisdom and diminution of "*ill temper*," and (4) "*flowing with it*" or "*letting go*" and a Rousseau-like "*back to nature*" as forms of *inability not* to react—might all be helpfully ingested and incorporated. (Cf. esp. EH I 4–6, W&S 348, WP 734.) This turns out not to be an isolated reference to the possible desirability of *ignorance*. Although Nietzsche associates the fear or anxiety of realizing something too soon with an incurable pessimism (BGE 59), he acknowledges the possibly great mistake in listening *too* carefully to the Delphic command: ". . . where *nosce te ipsum* would be the recipe for ruin; forgetting oneself, *misunderstanding* oneself, making oneself smaller, narrower, mediocre, become reason itself" (EH II 9).

What was Nietzsche suggesting? To answer this, I would like to relate his thoughts on self-ignorance to his view about bad conscience, or cruelty directed backward, i.e., against

oneself (GM III 20). Nietzsche, in what he considered to be "a first, provisional statement" of his own hypothesis concerning the origin of bad conscience (GM II 16), suggested that bad conscience results from man's being in a situation (viz., Society) in which his instincts cannot be expressed. Here there is internalization (cf. *supra*) with its resultant self-attacking. Here we have the repressing of, in particular, the instinct for freedom (GM II 17), which Nietzsche identifies with the will to power [*esp.* over oneself] (GM II 18, cp. WP 720, 871, 933). And here we have man estranged from the animal, i.e., instinctual, in himself; humans at this stage must rely upon, in fact are "reduced to their 'consciousness,' their weakest and most fallible organ" (GM II 16). What does man with a bad conscience have? An "illness, there is no doubt about that, but an illness as pregnancy is an illness" (GM II 19).

Leaving the relation to the issue of self-ignorance aside for the moment, we have what at first seems to be a rather Freudian view (to put it contrahistorically)—Man is in conflict with Society. Socialization results in or involves repression and this manifests itself at later times in neurotic—cf. incidentally Nietzsche's use of this notion in HAH I 244—or psychotic behavior. (*Civilization and Its Discontents*⁹ takes off from this.) But although there is this resemblance, I want to focus here on two dissimilarities. First (a repressed individual's¹⁰) bad conscience is likened to pregnancy rather than to, say, cancer or lobar pneumonia (which are at first blush more of what I take to be pathologies).

Having a bad conscience, to understand this pregnancy simile a little, is seen by Nietzsche as a process, something which *eo ipso* involves changing, and changing in a structured fashion. Here a psychic attribute is *not* understood as a state or condition. Much more recently such psychiatrists as David Cooper and Kazimierz Dabrowski have suggested that the natural process medically taken to be a psychotic state is basically hindered or totally inhibited from its natural course

⁹ (1930a) [SE 21: 64 ff. = GW 14: 421 ff.]

¹⁰ A quick view of *this* suggests one tack on "curing mental illness"—to totally un-repress the poor soul being "treated." Here the desired result would be an individual who has *no* blocks or repressions, who consequently has *no* screen memories functioning, to whom *all* past experience is readily available to consciousness. And thus we have the notion of a "clear" and the halfway house of a "release." (Cf. L. Ron Hubbard, *Dianetics* (1950) and the related therapy of dianetics, the latter recently pummeled with some popularity.)

(rather than aided, or "cured" to put it medically) by typical hospitalization.¹¹ It was in intuitive preagreement with this view that Nietzsche's point was made.

And a bad conscience is not simply any process, but one with a result. By involving a deep dissatisfaction with oneself—the inward-turned man's "I am sick of myself!" (GM III 14)—a type of self-inflicted wound occurs which itself brings about life, through the individual's struggle against this wound (cf. GM III 13 and *Twilight* I 8s "What does not destroy me, makes me stronger"). Bad conscience is "pregnant with a future" (GM II 16).

Second, Nietzsche relates the development of a bad conscience with increased reliance on consciousness. Unlike Freud, however, Nietzsche does not at all see this reliance on consciousness as a desirable state of affairs. To repeat, for Nietzsche consciousness is man's "weakest and most fallible organ" (GM II 16). It is basically in this kind of consideration that I see the connection between the issues of bad conscience and self-ignorance for Nietzsche (read on), and because of which I sense a rather *anti*-Freudian perspective in his psychiatric theorizing.

Whereas in traditional or classical psychoanalytic theory the aim is to bring repressed material to consciousness in spite of the individual's, the patient's, strong resistance, Nietzschean psychiatry would reject such a view's underpinnings. *This* psychiatry (to free this term from its recent medical impaction) is of course not committed to the position that the force or power of anything unconscious is dissipated upon the switch to its being fully conscious. (Taking such a position seems to have been a basic mistake on Freud's part. Cf. Fritz Perls, *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim*, "Talk," Sect. II, last page.)

¹¹ For accounts of one process allowed and encouraged to flow its natural course, see Morton Schatzman, "Madness and Morals," in *Counter Culture* (Joseph Berke, ed.), London: Peter Owen Ltd. in association with Fire Books, Ltd., 1969; and *Mary Barnes: Two Accounts of a Journey Through Madness* by Mary Barnes and Joseph Berke, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972. Incidentally, consider the phenomenological appropriateness of "it" rather than the scholarly "id" as reflecting Nietzsche's and Freud's use of *das Es* in the context of Mary Barnes' use of "IT": see esp. the discussion on p. 348 of the book with her name. (Schatzman and Berke are American psychiatrists living in London.) Cf. R. D. Laing's *Knots*, p. 84.

For Cooper's views, see *Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry*, pp. 79–81, 88 ff., etc., and for Dabrowski's, see *Positive Disintegration*, "Personnalité, psychonévroses et santé mentale d'après la théorie de la désintégration positive," Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965, etc.

Here Nietzschean psychiatry suggests that this Freudian position embodies an unlikely if not foolish tack: either consciousness will merely be unable to help, or it will succumb (due to its relative weakness, cf. *supra*) to the reverberations of the patient's new awareness. For Freud is in *this* sense more of a rationalist, more convinced of the ability of the (conscious) mind to handle matters than is Nietzsche. Good contrasts to Freud's suggestion¹² of removing amnesias (repressions) to let consciousness take over are both the *post*-psychoanalytic course of events concerning awareness and amnesia in the case of little Hans,¹³ as reported in the 1922 postscript (*Nachschrift*) to the case,¹⁴ and also Nietzsche's suggestion of "an entirely new lesson just dawning on the human eye, and hardly yet plainly recognizable: *to incorporate knowledge in ourselves* and make it instinctive—a problem which is only seen by those who have grasped the fact that until now only our *errors* have been incorporated in us, and that all our consciousness bases itself on errors!" (GS 11). The fact that Nietzsche's contrast here is between knowledge and error should not overpower the background view expressed in this passage that the object is to incorporate (*einverleiben*: cf. GM II 1, where incorporation and "in-psychoation" are related) knowledge and to make it instinctive.¹⁵ It is *not* to make it conscious.

The Nietzschean view in GS 11 which I am concerned with *here*, however, stresses man as a living organism, an animal, a being originally instinctual, and one most able to fulfill itself when it functions that way. The contrast with the Freudian model with its belief in consciousness as powerful—in the ways referred to above—is highlighted by these comments of Nietzsche's, and by his views that the "problem of consciousness (more correctly, of *becoming* conscious of *oneself*) confronts us for the first time when we begin to conceive how much we could do without it" (GS 354) and that "the chamber of human consciousness is *small!*" (GM III 18).

¹² "Freud's Psychoanalytic Method" (1904a) [at SE 7: 252 f. = GW 5: 9 f. = CP 1: 260–70].

¹³ "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-year-old Boy" (1909b) [SE 10: 5 ff. = GW 7: 243 ff. = CP 3: 149 ff.].

¹⁴ At SE 10: 148 f. = GW 13: 431 f. = CP 3: 288 f.

¹⁵ For those interested in an explanation of taking "instinct" (rather than another term, *especially* "drive") as the translation of *Trieb*, I suggest the translator's comments in the section "Notes on Some Technical Terms whose Translation Calls for Comment," SE 1: xxiii–xxvi, under the entry *Trieb* (pp. xxiv–xxvi).

If, then, Nietzschean psychiatry would not suggest a Freudian working-through of unconscious material (whether by means of free associating and dream analysis as the central technique or of considering the transference relation and resistance as the central issues, as psychoanalysis once viewed its defining characteristic¹⁶), and would place little confidence in the powers of consciousness, where does it lead? For Nietzsche, would there be psychotherapy? What suggestions does he offer for an individual who would otherwise go to the nearest analyst? He would of course *not* offer himself as a replacement for the analyst, at least on one rather plausible reading of "I am a railing by the torrent: let those who can, grasp me! Your crutch, however, I am not" (Z I 6). If the would-be patient *has* heard, *has* grasped Nietzsche, however, he can see that he has an involving experience ("task" just isn't adequate here) ahead of him. This needn't at all be depressing, and definitely not shameful. (Taste: "*What we do*. What we do is never understood, but always merely praised or criticized" GS 264.) It is the presentation of a situation in which the person involved can ripen: "In the end there may still remain open the question of whether we could *dispense* with our illness in the development of our virtue" (GS 120). There are, however, no Nietzschean commands, no Nietzschean proscriptions. Quoting Wagner in GS 99, Nietzsche presents the thought that "each one who wishes to become free must become so through himself." There is much to look forward to: "What does not destroy me, makes me stronger" (Twilight I 8; cf. *supra*).¹⁷

But there is no rush: Nietzsche warns his fellow man in some hapless state (*Unglück*) against one called by the "religion of pity" or by "the heart" to help, thinking "to have helped best when he has helped the fastest" (GS 338). (Administrators, and eager friends and therapists, *please* take note!) Nietzsche's belief that the person, viewed as a total organism, will evolve to health (freedom) to the extent that he/she reverses the social training of self-sacrifice (consider GS 21, GM II 6, BGE 33, EH IV 7, etc. here) starts from

¹⁶ "On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement" (1914d) [at SE 14: 16 = GW 10: 55 = CP 1: 298].

¹⁷ A basically Nietzschean view on the issues of great depression (what used to be called melancholia: cf. "My Melancholy Baby") and solitude can be seen in the letter Rilke wrote on August 4, 1904, at Borgeby gård, Flädie, Sweden, to Franz Kappus (Letter Eight in Rainer Maria Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*).

the notion that man has been crippled by what is now approvingly called "socialization." Morality, the key to society (*any* custom or *moré* rather than none taken as society's *first* principle: Dawn 16), crushes self-reliance (Dawn 163). It is for this reason and others that Nietzsche realizes that one cannot *simply*—at *our* stage of societal ("political" as in Greek *polis*) structuring, of consciousness, and of introjected decadence (this being an over-all attitude concerned with death and decay rather than with life and growth: Twilight II 1ff., CW Preface, WP 7, etc., for example; cf. below)—trust one's feelings (cf. A 59): "To trust one's feelings—that means to obey one's grandfather and one's grandmother and their grandparents more than the gods which are in *us*: our reason and our experience" (Dawn 35). If this becomes expressed in the notion of following oneself—cf. GS Overture/*Vorspiel* 7 ("*Vademecum—Vadetezum*"), GS 255 and 338, etc.—the issue here is, what *is* one's path, one's direction, one's way? (And by this do *not* read: job, occupation, life's calling [Twilight VIII 5]; nor: role [GS 356].) And why is it so difficult for anyone to answer this question? (A philosopher's interlude: Just what does answering this question amount to?)

III

Nonphilosophers may well reply to this parenthetical question with either an "It's obvious" or a questioning "What problem does *that* try to create?" Well, it's not obvious to me. What *is* problematic here is that an understanding of this question depends on a concept of the person and his/her life or history. Should this issue be understood in a very ordinary way—that a person *has* certain characteristics, traits, abilities, faults (lackings), etc., and that the problem of self-awareness is to be taken to be simply that of *learning* the personal facts (about oneself)? Or is it a development of this basic view into one considering both actual properties and also potentialities? Is Nietzsche suggesting an Aristotelian model here?

This latter interpretation, for example, makes sense of the Pindarian message Nietzsche repeats at different times in slightly different forms: "*What does your conscience say? You shall become who you are.*" (GS 270, cp. GS 335, EH subtitle, etc.) which on the former view is a rather silly command.

This Aristotle-inspired model may well allow for such a popular view as is manifest in "Just be yourself!" "Do your own thing!" etc.—against which a good dose of "*Said once more*. Public opinions, private lazinesses." (HAH I 482) and of recalling Nietzsche's lamenting that "the time in which we live throws its most 'timely' into us" (GS 378) are both helpful prescriptions. It does not at all account, however, for the stress which Nietzsche places elsewhere on total reversals of direction, in contrast to an Aristotelian model of developing one's potentials (the "straight line" of Twilight I 44 and A 1 notwithstanding).

The changes which can be best illuminated in a capacity/actuality model are only *one* sort of change. Nietzsche *does* see change as integral to life (cf. GS 26, Dawn 573, W&S 333) but this change does not limit itself either to a mere self-preserving (cf. esp. *Anti-Darwin*: Twilight IX 14) or to a straightforward "development" (cf. Dawn 560, GS 371, and below).

Each individual is a mixture of different *types* of culture, at *least* so far as each learns something from the political (again, as in *polis*) or societal environment. Part of this motley condition is having mixed instincts; "*each of us* still has the bad instincts" (A 59, emphasis added), for example, in addition to other instincts. The "bad instincts" here are the Christian ones. Nietzsche ties *his* "discovery" of what a Christian viewpoint does to the individual with the start of psychology (see esp. EH IV 6): before searching out, digging under and behind the *possibly* attractive veneer of Christianity—to find it an indoctrination into self-hatred, self-laceration, self-mistrust, into a praising of everything which is life-denying (A 15–18, 49, 51, etc., EH IV 7f., etc.)—all putative psychology hid central political/sociological realities from its own eyes.

This addition of decadent (life-combating) instincts involves coming to mistrust one's own prior instincts ("to make mistrust of the instincts second nature": EH IV 8). This Nietzsche sees as a main function of the concept of *sin*, which is a moralistic conceptualization of displeasure. Instincts here are put into question, and moralizing (see the definition in EH IV 7) is then feasible.

Nietzsche feels the relationship between morality and instincts which are not smooth-functioning to be quite tight: both in fact are themselves manifestations (not causes: cf. Twilight VI 1f.) of some sort of malfunctioning. The need to

deliberate about the correctness of one's actions, whether performed or contemplated, the hesitating *against* what one is intuitively about to do, etc. are clear indications that one's nature is not ascendant, natural, unproblematic, smooth. *With* these characteristics, there is action and then one is done with it, whatever it was. ("The entire inner world [was] originally as thin as if it were stretched between two membranes"—the let-go past and the not-contemplated future?—GM II 16.) The notion here of unconsciousness (lack of reflective consciousness) of instinct and of instinctive action fits well with Edouard von Hartmann's understanding of instinct: "Instinct is purposive action without consciousness of purpose" (*Philosophy of the Unconscious*, Book 1, Sect. B, Part 3).

Nietzsche is *not* suggesting a dogmatic approach to life with this model of actions freed from prior or subsequent deliberation and scrutiny—cf. his critique of faith—but rather is indicating some of the ways in which instinctive action has been hampered by the presence of decadence, in which the high value placed on deliberation and intentionality in modern morality (contrast, e.g., the Aristotelian concept of action flowing freely from a self-harmonious agent of practical wisdom with the Kantian one of a totally moral-minded agent determining moral law by use of a mechanical formula) might be questioned or reevaluated, and *in which it might be possible to demystify one's bad conscience*, in the Laingian sense of demystifying.¹⁸

IV

If this is something of what answering this question of what one's path is and is not, then the outlines of an *answer* to why it is so difficult to answer this question become clearer. For, first, this question is only asked in midstream, (*in medias res*, as they said in Rome), when one has been drawn away from one's instincts. Second, the question calls for *decisions* possibly much more than for *discovering* the "facts." These decisions concern which directions to *direct* oneself in, which aspects of oneself to help to flourish, and which to cut short (cf. the passage, e.g., on self-gardening, Dawn 560). Then, one continually has the option of reevaluating direc-

¹⁸ R. D. Laing, "Mystification, Confusion, and Conflict," in *Intensive Family Therapy*, edited by Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy and James Framo (Hoeber, 1965).

tions set out upon, of deciding if one has gotten all desired out of a given way of understanding things: Nietzsche talks of *using* convictions, "Convictions as a *means*" (A 54), and of modifying one's viewpoint *and* direction (Dawn 573, W&S 333, GS 371, Twilight IX 18, etc., and below). These are *some* issues related to the answering; how *is* this answering to be accomplished, however?

Since an individual does not come to have a great self-dissatisfaction, a biting conscience (which can become a virtue, a tool) until after society's forces have de-instinctualized him/her, the first task becomes one of unlearning this aspect of what one has been taught. Man, for example, has been made prejudiced against himself (W&S 262). Self-love, like all love (GS 334), must be learned: "One must learn to love oneself—thus I teach—with a wholesome and healthy love, so that one can bear to be with oneself and need not roam" (Z III 11 Part 2). And for this, "free time," time not "filled" with busy work such as one's time-*occupying* occupation, walks, uncovering our own treasures by being with ourselves, by following our thoughts where (and wherever) they lead us *ARE ALL EXTREMELY IMPORTANT* (GS 329, Dawn 173 and 178, Twilight I 1, HAH I 284; Twilight I 34; Z III 11 Part 2, Dawn 491; Dawn 500, etc.).

The task of unlearning involves both rejecting values passively accepted, breaking old tablets—for "whoever heeds commands does not lead *himself*" (Z III 12 Part 7)—and also reversing the negative evaluations smuggled in with any (ascetic) ideal, which most strongly results in a self-dissatisfaction, a self-loathing. Nietzsche puts this: "In every ascetic morality man prays to one part of himself as God and must consequently diabolize the remaining part" (HAH I 137). This source of self-hatred will be removed in very important moments: "The great epochs of our life come when we gain the courage to rechristen our evil as what is best in us" (BGE 116).

Obviously this creativity ("To will liberates, for to will is to create: thus I teach," Z III 12 Part 16) will not be encouraged by a majority of people in one's environment, those closest *least* likely of all in many instances. ("The more anyone lets himself go, the less the others let him go," HAH II 83—therapist as counterweight to others?) But Nietzsche, as I think is clear, is not suggesting a simple policy of fulfilling one's virtues. He has much more to suggest than that we "become who we are." (Cf. Charles Andler, who, considering

GS and EH, claims¹⁹ that this is the only moral precept which these two works would recognize.) I take many of Nietzsche's comments about virtues (virtue/*Tugend*/*aretē*) to contrast with this, seeing virtues not as capabilities to be actualized, period (*tout court*); but as characteristics to be transcended or overcome (e.g., GS Overture/*Vorspiel* 5 ["*An die Tugendsamen*"], Z I Preface 4, Z I 5, EH-Dawn 2). And there are some virtues to be sacrificed to others, as I interpret GS 266: "*Where cruelty is necessary. Whoever has greatness is cruel to his virtues and deliberations of the second order.*"

The notion that one has a given personality and character is a societal fiction whose purpose it is to *fix* the person into a pattern societally/politically desirable: "Man himself must first of all have become *calculable, regular, necessary*, even in his own image of himself, if he is to be able to stand security for *his own future*, which is what one who promises does!" (GM II 1; cf. the following sections in GM for the elaboration of this view). If a person is convinced, that is, that he can only act a certain way, or totally accepts that he should only so act, he will be much less likely to try to act differently. (It is here, as elsewhere, that a mistaken *understanding* of reality makes an effective difference while that reality itself basically doesn't.) The positive aspect of a moral version of this is stated by P.-J. Proudhon, that we are obligated only to keep our word (in, for example, the Sixth Study of his *Idee générale de la révolution au XIXe siècle*). A Nietzschean response is the claim of Max Stirner that to feel and accept this obligation is to abdicate one's freedom (*The Ego and His Own*, Part 2, Sect. 2, Subsect. 1). Others who have frozen themselves into stability (to refocus an image of Stirner's) might well find those persevering in their freedom to be unfathomable. As Nietzsche puts it in GS 371, "we are mistaken by others, always growing, changing, shedding our bark each spring, becoming younger, higher, stronger. We grow like trees—that is hard to understand, like all life!—not in one place, but all over, not in one direction, but equally upwards and outwards as inwards and downwards."²⁰ Whereas Stirner is more interested here in man as a societal being (*zoon politikon*), Nietzsche has taken a new tack. He is looking at man as a being. Not a nothing which

¹⁹ Nietzsche: *sa vie et sa pensée*, vol. 2, p. 80.

²⁰ Small omissions not marked. The section is entitled "We Unintelligible Ones."

has nothing until a society puts something into him, and not something which would become nothing if these societal aspects were totally transcended. (Pace Robert Paul Wolff's "Beyond Tolerance" in the small collection *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*.) There is an extra-societal ("non-null") aspect to the human being, and all theorizing which disavows this aspect is merely expressing its prejudice for total justification of any so-called "socialization." Here Nietzsche agrees with Indian metaphysics, Christian and social libertarian views which support a critique of traditional psychoanalysis as a means of changing the individual to accommodate to his/her society. What these agree on is that there is something beyond the societally inculcated, and something, therefore, that—to give a premature notice to the next generations—is being disregarded in certain conservative (re the society, *not* re the individual members thereof) philosophies, both rightist and leftist (to group a supposedly basically worlds-apart pair together). Where this odd grouping of Nietzsche and cohorts will split up is over the issue of what this something else amounts to. Whereas, for example, in Hindu and Christian thought (to speak broadly) it is the universal within (God, the Lord, the Divine, etc.), for Nietzsche it is just the opposite of the universal—it is the most individual. (A satisfying comparison of Nietzschean and even just some contemporary radical psychiatry would take us too deep into just this one issue, but briefly, the Radical Therapist suggestion, for example, of getting the individual [i.e., the "patient"] into political activity of one sort or another [anti-police, anti-landlord, anti-war, anti-male, etc. actions] is clearly contra-Nietzschean. The latest 1972-on form of this sort of thinking is the idea that to break away from the subsociety one is a member of, it is necessary to form a caucus/tribe/"family"—another *subsociety*! Still no notion of the individual as an individual.) As Nietzsche identified this extra-societal aspect of man: "*Dealing with one's higher self*. Everyone has his good day, when he finds his higher self [*Selbst*]; and true humanity demands each to be appraised only according to this state and not according to the work-days of dependence and servitude . . . But men themselves deal differently with their higher self . . . Many live in awe and humility before their ideal and would like to deny it; they are afraid of their higher self . . . [I]t is frequently called a gift of the gods, while in fact everything else is a gift of the gods [of chance]; this, however, is of man him-

self" (HAH I 624; cf. Kantian moral "knowledge" as *self-ignorance*, GS 335).

What Nietzsche is suggesting here is that the individual find what he/she is looking for within ("intrapersonally"). To look for what one is desirous of coming to have, to see, to feel, to be—*outside* of oneself (whether in another person, a group, party, nation, important cause, material objects)—is to deny one's own fecundity and ability. To direct one's admiration outward is often (perhaps usually) to disregard and devalue oneself—something well taught by society. (Self-acceptance and self-assurance are felt to be narcissistic or, recently, "ego-tripping." Why is there such joy at seeing misery fall on someone who has been self-content?) And Nietzsche likewise associated piety with an underestimation and hence underrespect, if not disrespect, for oneself (Dawn 36). And so I do not find "perhaps man will climb even higher, when he no longer *flows out* into a god" (GS 285) an at all strange thought. Following this, Nietzsche suggests that one *give oneself the opportunity* to learn to appreciate oneself. The route to this must be paved since the general deficiency of the then (and now) present manner of enculturation (cp. *Bildung*) and education was (and is) that "no one learns, no one strives after, no one teaches—to *bear solitude*" (Dawn 443). The route, in fact, has to be made. And the initial contravening inertia will tend to make people want to avoid being with themselves. (Thus television, movies, games, hobbies, books, much writing,²¹ portable radios, fear of "doing nothing.") But even when the other's well is filled and you are thirsty, even then Nietzsche presents a person in conversation who mentions that the water from the well of his self (*Selbst*) has not yet come to light and adds, "Therefore I go into solitude—in order not to drink out of everyone's cistern" (Dawn 491, entitled "Solitude for That Reason, Too" [*Auch deshalb Einsamkeit!*]; this echoes the image of water to be drawn from one's well in HAH I 286). Nietzsche later writes of what to expect in solitude: "In solitude, whatever one has brought into it grows—also the inner beast" (Z IV 13 Part 13).

What is Nietzsche suggesting? That the self-dissatisfied person reject all morality, as a kind of revenge against society

²¹ Contrast Nietzsche's finding his middle books, Dawn and GS, the most likable/most *simpático* [*sympathetischsten*] ones, since they were his most personal ones; his letter of June 21, 1888, to Karl Knortz. I find them to be fine picnic grounds.

for bringing out this dissatisfaction? That he stop admiring *all* figures—gods, heroes, friends, etc.? Or become isolated from as many people as possible, striving for total hermitism? That the inner beast be released to flourish?

To this last question, no. The quotation just above continues, "Therefore solitude is inadvisable for many" (Z IV 13 Part 13). It is (*not* paradoxically) wise of those who are not wise to keep from going through experiences helpful only to the wise (cf. W&S 298): every organism can instinctively have its own wisdom. Nietzsche is not proposing, then, the doctrine that everyone would benefit from the difficulties of these heights. Not everyone is a mountain climber. Nor does Nietzsche see, as all there is to aspire to, being a free spirit, one fully self-determining, unbound by the desire for knowledge and certainty (GS 347, cf. EH-HAH 1); one no longer a convict of his/her convictions (cf. HAH I 636f.); "who thinks other than one expects of him on the basis of his origin, environment, his position and job or on the basis of the dominant views of the day [*Zeitansichten*]" (HAH I 225; this type of individual *is* taken to be possible!). Recall that the "History of an Error" has as the end of its penultimate stage the *Teufelslärm*, devilish racket, of all free spirits (Twilight IV 5; cf. GS 290, WP 904). Nietzsche is not envisioning a world either of Brethren of the Free Spirit, seen as Heretics of the Free Spirit by Albertus Magnus (cf. Paul Zweig's *The Heresy of Self-Love*), or of assassins/hashshashin. Nietzsche is hardly ever to be understood coarsely. The independent and cautious (epistemic) attitude of the free spirit (HAH I 282) is to be supplemented by a *self*-critical teasing-out process. Although the question may strike some as quaintly Greek, if not Ionian, let me ask how a self-pruning is possible, given that there is just *one* individual involved. How can *one* entity be in any conflict with itself? (Cp. "How is a plurality, differentiation, etc. possible, given a unity, homogeneity, etc.?"") If such a question *should* be answered here, let me say merely that an individual is not a psychologically homogeneous entity, nor even one whose interests, desires, needs, instincts, etc. are well integrated. The desire to fulfill or satisfy any of these is not automatically compatible with other parallel desires. The original desire for freedom or will to power is a many-vectored thing. (As Nietzsche realized, in contrast to *Faust*, one may contain *many* souls: BGE 244. Cf. Hesse's *Steppenwolf*.) The work of selecting and developing, cultivating or eliminating various aspects amounts to the formation

of a one-cultured individual, in Nietzsche's notion of culture. In other concepts, to a self-integrating of a person. This needn't result in a one-track individual, however.

As Nietzsche feels that solitude is not for everyone, other of his thoughts should be considered with similar provisos. There is not only a pervasive feeling that solitude can be of great importance to a person's reaching the self which societal/political involvement keeps him or her from. (*Not* that this self, this higher, most individual self, is the same as at birth, or in childhood, or at any earlier period in one's life: one *deepens* through experience to new heights.) There is also a counterpoising admiration of friendship. This will most likely make excellent sense to anyone who has been able to enjoy even just a modicum of solitude: it results in an extension of antennae into the worlds of others; then encounter with another is not so practiced that it jams the picking-up of the other's differentness, individuality, personality. As a reading of Nietzsche's comments on friendship show—e.g., HAH I 499, GS 61 (entitled "In Honor of Friendship"), etc.—he was not suggesting a hermitic life as desirable. His understanding of friendship (*not* equal to mutual pity) required spiritual—this is better than "psychological"—equals: "Are you a slave? Then you cannot be a friend" (Z I 14; the entire section is relevant here).

V

Does this view of friendship suggest a complement to Nietzsche's "I am a railing . . . Your crutch, however, I am not" (Z I 6)? And is there a philosophy/theory of psychotherapy wrapped up in that fuller view? Note that some contemporary psychiatrists, psychologists, and other psychotherapists (Carl Rogers, Hellmuth Kaiser, Louis Fierman, Allen Enelow, etc.) suggest that besides actually seeing the patient or client often, all that is required is "that the therapist engage his patient in as open, direct, spontaneous, and genuine [a] communicative relationship as he can"²² for successful psychotherapy to occur. Which sounds like being a good friend to someone.

Given this, is Nietzsche perhaps accepting the possibility of psychotherapy which is *not directive* (i.e., directed by the therapist)? Yet even for *this* type of therapy (related subspecies of which are called Rogerian, Kaiserian, etc.), can't

²² L. B. Fierman, M.D., "Myths in the Practice of Psychotherapy," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 12 (April 1965): 408-14 at 412.

one suggest that psychotherapy still essentially involves a specific type of asymmetrical relationship between two or more people which Nietzsche only criticizes? Namely, that type in which at least one of the people is accepted by those concerned as "healthy," "well," "strong," or at least the "helper," "facilitator," "doctor," "therapist," etc. And of the other or others involved, at least one as the "patient," the "mentally ill (or 'disturbed') one," the "client" or "guest" or "seeker"?

If so, aren't Nietzsche's critiques of pity, at Dawn 16 and 134f., GS 99 and 338, Z II 3 and III 5, BGE 225, EH I 8, etc., all directly opposed to any such relationship? And what of his nonrespect for the weak, or the self-denying, or those who wallow in unhappiness while making no attempt at improving their state of affairs (GS 312)?

A first reply might be seen in the idea of certain contemporary London psychiatrists—most specifically R. D. Laing, D. Cooper, J. Berke, M. Schatzman, and associates—that there is nothing *defining* in an interpersonal relationship about one's accepting the function of helper at various moments. Part of the theoretical position of the new Arbours Housing Association, Ltd. (50 Courthope Rd., London NW3), for example, is that *any* member of the group at any given time may serve as a "host" while it is totally explicitly understood by all that this in no way places any stricture on future possibilities, such as this same individual's later wanting and receiving help him or herself. This view suggests the non-facticity of people (putting it succinctly), the variability of their psychological and phenomenological states, and the plurality of forms the interrelating of the same given people may take.

Nietzsche's critique of psychotherapy, however, would seem more radical (i.e., more to the root of things) than that of Laing *et al.* if the preceding comments about his views are on the right track. For Nietzsche the question does not focus on whether there is permanence to these particular ways of acting and responding between various individuals (their "roles") to put this uglily but rather to whether these ways come about *at all*, even if evenly distributed in all ways possible.

Yet there is incorporated into this line of thinking a particular view of what psychotherapeutic relationships amount to which I want to question, and that is the aspect suggesting the personal (qua person) superiority of the therapist. Dealing with another with compassion or pity is disrespecting the

other under a self-disguised smugness, and is barely harmonious with the nobility of either the "patient"/"guest" or the therapist. Thus, even earnest, truthful, and true lauding ("stroking"), if given when a felt *need* for it is there, becomes a self-defeating act.

Nietzsche does talk of treating the "mentally ill" (*Geisteskranken*): "above all not with haughty mercy, but with medical sagacity, medical good will" (Dawn 202), and of physicians of the soul (*Ärzte der Seele*) (Dawn 52; cf. Dawn 322, HAH I 243, Z I 22 Part 2, etc.). In GM III 15 he talks of "the necessity of doctors and nurses who are themselves sick" (he takes these to include the ascetic priest).

What could this GM passage mean? That individuals who have gone through, or are in the process of going through, the kinds of experience the "patient"/"guest" is enveloped in (whether taken to be insanity, anxiety, psychological difficulty, self-questioning, self-hatred, or something else in this same area), can be of great help (*not* involving the haughty mercy mentioned above). As Laing suggests, a degradation ceremonial can be replaced by an initiation ceremonial, with the person being "guided with full social encouragement and sanction into inner space and time, by people who have been there and back again. Psychiatrically, this would appear as ex-patients helping future patients to go mad" (*The Politics of Experience*, New York: Pantheon, 1967, pp. 105f.). Whereas Nietzsche is not suggesting that the therapists help the future patient to go mad, they are in a position to help him or her: to go mad *or not*, depending on the path *he* or *she* chooses. Such people, having gone through the psychology of a bad conscience, of being sick of oneself, to a new location of self-acceptance (cf. BGE 287: "The noble soul has reverence for itself"), of self-love, beyond attacking themselves and their actions (the bite of conscience as the perpetration of cowardice against one's own acts: Twilight I 10), *illustrate* the possibility of each transcending what has been made of him/her. (Taking God as *Deus sive Natura*, as nature, as surroundings, I here disagree with Spinoza, *Ethics*, Book 1, Prop. 27.) This in no way denies that each person may be at a different stage or position along a different path, each self-transcending (cf. above) a different self toward a different result.

What some require to send *their* dog away (in the image of GS 312), to begin their *own* self-pruning, to *feel* their self-hatred and dissatisfaction and to nourish it to death (*This*

suggestion is an intensified version of Montaigne's "I have allowed colds, migraines, and other ailments to grow old and die a natural death within me; I lost them when I had half trained myself to harbor them. They are conjured better by courtesy than by defiance," *Essays* III: 13. Cf. the third of six means mentioned by Nietzsche in Dawn 109)—what some require for this is realizing the possibility of doing so, realizing that there is another "who had the courage to be himself, who knew how to stand alone without first waiting for heralds and signs from above" (GM III 5, in talking of Schopenhauer), who is "not only a great thinker, but also a real person" (U₃ 7, also about Schopenhauer), in short, a philosopher. (I do not mean an academic philosopher, nor a "philosophical laborer," as in BGE 211.) This means: *one who creates values* (BGE 211). And it means being noble, in Nietzsche's concept of nobility. "The noble type of man experiences itself as determining values, it does not need approval; . . . it is value-creating" (BGE 260).

There is something paradoxical, difficult about this, but *not* impossible. If one *does* need to see another as self-determining, self-pruning, etc., before beginning the same process himself, won't his or her future actions, changes, etc., although seeming to be *self-governed*, actually be *therapist-governed*? This is highly likely, but *not* necessary. The therapist *can* avoid directing the direction *or* the rate of *any* changes, and this is the tack suggested by Nietzsche's GS Overture/*Vorspiel* 7, GS 255, Z I 6, etc. (Of course those disagreeing *basically* with Nietzschean psychiatry will not especially see this as something to avoid, and so we can see "behavior therapists"²³ actually giving patients "homework," i.e., exercises of certain sorts of activity to practice between visits!) In fact, there is no reason for the therapist to have to indicate *that* the patient change, or that it is desirable that the patient change. The whole situation *itself* is an expression of the need or desire for change, and the patient's realization of this is already *incorporated* in his/her seeing the therapist, except in unusual cases. (E.g., those of involuntary psychotherapy, *not* initiated by the patient. I will not address this issue here except to suggest the writings of Thomas Szasz.) And if the patient is seeing the therapist but does not at all *feel* the desire *or* need to change, this is *as* acceptable as any other attitude on change the patient might have. Here we

²³ Behaviorists: more accurately practologists—formed from *praktikos/praxis*, not *prōktos*—than psychologists.

see the therapist as offerer, *not* as commander, *not* as leader (cf. *Twilight* I 14). A Nietzschean therapist is not attempting to derive self-satisfaction from the patient (having realized him or herself as an independent source of self-evaluation), and so is not needful of the patient's "success" or "cure." (Compare the Zen archer or samurai.) He or she does not *rely* on the patient, and so is free to let the patient see, *however* the latter does or wishes to²⁴ (the therapist's *amor fati*). The patient is thus in a situation in which only his or her own view is of concern, and only his or her evaluation of it is relevant. *Learning to evaluate for oneself by removal of external commands about how and what to evaluate.*

VI

Now, all of this has been articulated as if there *is* a person, but one of Nietzsche's contributions (if not *the* contribution) to philosophical psychology has been the suggestion that there is no such thing (BGE 54, *Twilight* III 5, etc.). Perhaps some concerned with the issue of psychotherapy will say to this that they reject it as ridiculous, yet want to use these other components of Nietzsche's psychiatric views (following HAH II 201), but let me first take a more articulated version of this general no-ego position.

For this, consider *Twilight* VI 8. In this passage the critiques of the notions of self and of causality are combined, and we find Nietzsche proposing that as for man, the "fatality of his essence is not to be disentangled from the fatality of all that has been and will be . . . One is necessary, one is a bit of fatefulness, one belongs to the whole, one is in the whole."

"Yes, but what does that have to do with something like psychotherapy?" It has a lot to do with it, important implications for it. It puts into perspective, for example, the shift to family therapy suggested by the theorizing of such differently oriented psychiatrists as Freud, Ted Lidz, and Laing.²⁵ For *their* theorizing about an individual's being inextricably involved with and consequently best understood in terms of his/

²⁴ And thus I disagree with the view in Antonin Artaud's "Van Gogh, le suicide de la société" (1947) that psychiatrists must see enemies in every artist, every genius. On the issue of the psychiatrist's self-esteem, see esp. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950, pp. 13-18, 23-25, 41, 198f.

²⁵ For something more specifically metafamilial, cp. Laing's *Politics of the Family*, esp. the notion of mapping images, with HAH I 379, Dawn 35, etc.

her family can be seen as the first defocusing of the vision of people as monads, totally separate substances in the world, into a vision of a totally interrelated single universe, Nietzsche's vision.

And given this vision, all of one's situations and states can be seen as part of this larger something. This does not at all imply that one has no role in the future, in one's own future, for one is, after all, a part of this larger world (cf. HAH II 363, W&S 61, etc.). This seems to be nothing less than the view of the world which allows one to see all states as essentially involved in all other states, becoming involved (or not) in any aspect as related to all others. Depressions as experiences to ingest and thrive on and so to grow and change into joy; joy as a state dependent for its being on depression and as yet another stone tossed into one's soul to allow experience, feeling, questioning and resolving, changing, and a chance for acceptance *or* rejection. Change and repetition blend together on this level.

There *is*, then, an alternative to anxiety's leading to the desire to seek allies, to disguise this drivenness into something positive such as sheer sexual attraction, and the failure of this itself to remove the initial anxiety leading to the confused desire for reproduction. (Cf. W. R. Bion on "pairing," for example in his *Experience in Groups*.) A new perspective on the *original* situation is called for. *Amor fati*: "Joy, however, does not want heirs, or children—joy wants itself, wants eternity, wants recurrence, wants everything eternally the same" (Z IV 11 Part 9).

THE ETERNAL RECURRENCE

ARTHUR DANTO

The eternal recurrence idea, roughly, is that whatever in fact happens, has happened infinitely many times and will re-happen an infinity of times, *exactly* in the same way in which it happens now. So, strictly speaking, there is really no "last" man but rather an infinity of last men. And strictly speaking there is no single person Nietzsche, but instead an infinite number of *exactly* similar Nietzsches, mirroring one another throughout time. And, like the superman, the doctrine of eternal recurrence is taught by Zarathustra:

You would say "Now I die and vanish." And "Now I am a nothing." Souls are mortal as bodies.

But the knot of causes, in which I am tangled, returns again—and creates me again. I belong myself to the causes of eternal recurrence.

I come again, with this sun, this earth, this eagle, this snake—not to a new life or a better life or a similar life:

I come eternally again to this same life, in what is greatest and what is smallest, and teach again the eternal recurrence of all things (ZIII "*Der Genesende*").

It is hard to know what to make of this notion, not merely with regard to any intrinsic difficulties in it—and there are many—but with respect to the radical sort of conventionalism Nietzsche appeared to espouse and continued to espouse after the publication of *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Things are allegedly fictions, solidities arbitrarily projected onto a markless flux; in nature, even assuming there are things, no two of them are alike; laws are simply conventions, of sheerly human contrivance; there are in the world no causes and no effects—these are propositions which Nietzsche seems over and over again, with minor variations, to have insisted upon. He regarded the doctrine as the most scientific of hypotheses and, indeed, sought in science for confirmation of it. But then, consonantly with his views on science, this "law," as part of science, would be a conventionalist fiction. Yet the idea ex-

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cited him deeply, and we must try to determine what reasons he felt he had in support of the doctrine, and then what was his attitude toward it, assuming his reasons were sound. That is, to put the matter pragmatically, we must see what difference its being true or false would make to him—although he seldom discussed the possibility of its being false. One of the first occasions on which he mentions it conveys pretty well how he felt:

What if a demon were to creep after you one day or night, in your loneliest loneliness, and say: "This life which you live and have lived, must be lived by you once again and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and every sigh, and everything unspeakably small and great in your life, must come again to you, and all in the same series and sequence . . . the eternal hourglass will again and again be turned—and you with it, dust of the dust!"—Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke to you thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment, in which you would answer him: "Thou art a god and never have I heard anything more divine!" (GS 341).

The doctrine is by and large presented in just such fanciful terms in Nietzsche's published writings, or hinted at, or stated obliquely with no particular effort at argument or proof. And perhaps Nietzsche came in time to believe he *had* proved it: it often happens that a certain theory is presented by a philosopher in a programmatic manner, and afterward is simply presupposed in his writings without his ever having worked it out in detail. But Nietzsche did leave behind some purported arguments, presumably elaborated around 1881, the time at which he was composing *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*. The following extract is perhaps the most detailed statement of it in his *Nachgelassene Werke*:

The total amount of energy (*All-kraft*) is limited, not "infinite": let us beware of such excesses in concepts! Consequently, the number of states (*Lagen*), combinations, changes, and transformations (*Entwicklungen*) of this energy is tremendously great and practically immeasurable, but in any case finite and not infinite. But the time through which this total energy works is infinite. That means the energy is forever the same and forever active. An infinity has already passed away before this present moment. That means that all possible transformations must already have taken place. Consequently, the present transformation is a repetition, and thus also that which gave rise to it, and that which arises from it, and so backward and forward again! Insofar as the totality of states

of energy (*die Gesammilage aller Kräfte*) always recurs, everything has happened innumerable times . . . (*Werke*: Leipzig, 1901, XII, 51).

This is an exceedingly opaque piece of writing, and one is rather put off by the two occurrences of "consequently" (*Folglich*) which appear in it: are they to be taken as literary or logical? I assume the latter, since this passage is offered as an argument. But then it turns out to be rather a poor argument. Let us try to reconstruct it. To begin with, we list three propositions which Nietzsche felt to be true and interconnected:

1. The sum-total of energy in the universe is finite.
2. The number of states (*Lagen*) of energy is finite.
3. Energy is conserved.

These propositions are clearly independent. The truth of (3) is compatible with the truth *and* falsity of (1), and conversely. And (2) might be false even if both (1) and (3) were true. Nietzsche seems to regard (2) as *entailed* by (1), but it is not. To be sure, he has not specified how the term "state" is to be used, and pending such restrictions it is very difficult indeed to know whether (2) is true or false. But one could give a wholly natural interpretation of *Lagen* in which (1) and (3) are true and (2) would be false. Imagine some conservative energy system the total energy of which has some finite number, say 6, where some of the energy is kinetic. Suppose again that the kinetic energy increases, so the potential energy decreases, but at a rate such that the first approaches 6 while the latter approaches 0. These limits could be approached indefinitely without being reached, and there could in principle be an infinite number of "states" of kinetic energy, having a different magnitude at every instant, without the recurrence of any single magnitude. On such a model, (1) and (3) would be true and (2) false. So we must regard (2) as independent of (1) and (3).¹

But how do (1) through (3) entail that any single *Lage* occurs an infinite number of times? The answer is that they do not. We need also

¹ The ancient theory of cosmic return sometimes maintained that there were a finite number of atoms, hence a finite number of combinations of atoms. This would surely be unexceptionable, but Nietzsche has rejected atomism as a fiction. He uses instead *All-kraft* and *Lage*. It clearly doesn't follow from the fact that the sum is finite that there is a finitude of parts. The sum of the series $1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} \dots$ is a finite number, 2. But it hardly follows that there is a finite number of members in the series.

4. Time is infinite.

5. Energy has infinite duration.

Now, suppose there were exactly *three* energy-lagen, *A*, *B*, *C*. And suppose that each of these occurred for a *first* time a finite time ago, say at *t*-3, *t*-2, and *t*-1. Say that *A* had the earliest first occurrence of the three, at *t*-3. Then, before *t*-3, no *lage* of the three possible *lagen* our model supposes could have existed. But from (4) it follows that there must have been time before *t*-3. And from (5) it follows that there must have been energy before *t*-3. But from (3) it follows that the amount of energy before and after *t*-3 is the same. But on our hypothesis, at least *one* of the three possible *lagen* must exist if energy exists, these being the *only* energy *lagen*. Hence at least *one* of these *lagen* must have existed before *t*-3, or, what comes to the same thing, there can be no first occurrence for *each* of the *lagen*. Hence at least *one* of them must have occurred an infinite number of times. But quite apart from the fact that we do not know which of the three it is, it is nonetheless the case that so far we at best can prove that one of them occurred an infinite number of times, and this is compatible with the possibility that *two* of them happened a finite number of times.

Suppose *A* has occurred an infinity of times before *B* occurs. *B* would mark a cut-off point temporally behind which stretches an infinitude of occurrences of *A*. But what sense would it make to say that *A* occurs an infinite number of times though nothing else happens? Would it not be more appropriate to speak of one event of infinite duration? Nietzsche would rule this out as constituting an equilibrium, and his point is that if an equilibrium is ever reached, it would persist eternally. If there were only *A* through an infinity, nothing could bring about a change, for there is nothing but *A*, and to bring in something from outside would violate (3). So let us add

6. Change is eternal.

But the simplest sort of change would be an alternation of a pair of events, *A* and *B*. With our model and (1) through (6) we can prove that at least *two* *lagen* have occurred an infinite number of times. And this is still compatible with the possibility that *one* of the three possible *lagen* occurs a finite number of times. But now imagine we have an infinity of alternations . . . *A-B-A-B-A-B-A-B* . . . , and at a new cut-off point *C* occurs, so that *C* had a first occurrence a finite

time ago. Nothing is so far incompatible with this possibility. But if we add something like

7. Principle of sufficient reason,

we can perhaps rule out a first occurrence for *C*. That is, there must now be a sufficient condition for *C*. But then it must be either *A* or *B*, these being all our model allows. Then since each of these things has happened an infinity of times, if either of them is a sufficient condition for *C*, *C* must have occurred an infinite number of times.

By repeated applications, we can increase our model by any finite number and prove that nothing can have occurred for a first time. But then nothing can in the future occur for a first time either. Of course we can hardly regard this as a proof of the impossibility of creation *ex nihilo* since we have pretty much had to assume this with (3), (4), and (5).

We can, then, reconstruct Nietzsche's argument with a melange of *a priori* and empirical propositions, each independent of the others and each of which could be separately denied. But further discussion is out of place here and we turn to the question of why Nietzsche thought the doctrine so important.

To begin with, it would be incompatible with the idea that the entire course of history approaches some goal, has some "meaning." For let *G* be such a goal. Then either *G* cannot ever occur, or *G* has occurred an infinity of times. Hence to accept the doctrine entails a rejection of *certain* religious interpretations of history. On the other hand, it is not the sole alternative to these, and the doctrine is compatible with the possibility that each iterated transformation (*Entwicklung*) has a goal.

Secondly, the doctrine can support a certain kind of optimism. For there can be no *permanent lage*, no infinitude characterized by *A-A-A-A . . .* Hence, the "last man" doesn't really constitute a danger of the sort envisaged by Zarathustra. But then, by the same criterion, the doctrine can support a certain kind of pessimism. The detested institutions will appear again and again. Yet, as in certain forms of Mahayana Buddhism, a Buddha appears at a critical moment in each cosmic cycle, so a Nietzsche must appear, again and again, when humankind is at its lowest point, enjoining upon his fellows a fresh effort. Does it matter that we shall all pass away, return again, pass away again. The answer is it does not. What counts is the effort, the will-to-power, the joy in overcoming, not for what it leads to, but in itself. And man

should "accordingly" cherish this for its own sake, the importance of all goals being radically diminished when, like Sisyphus, we see we must do the same things over and over again: "My formula for greatness in men is *Amor Fati*: that one should not wish things to be otherwise, not before and not after, in the whole of eternity" (EH "Why I Am So Clever" 10).

"My doctrine states," he writes in the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* period, "So live that you must desire to live again. This is your duty. At any rate you will live again. He for whom striving gives the greatest feeling, let him strive. He for whom rest gives the greatest feeling, let him rest. He to whom order, following, obeying gives the greatest feeling, let him obey. He must only be clear as to what gives him the highest feeling, and be shy of no means! Eternity is worth it!" (*Werke*, XII, 116). So act (or so be) that you would be willing to act in just that manner (or be just this way) an infinity of times. In this way, perhaps, men might feel free of *ressentiment*. In each accepting ourselves, we should each accept one another. In existentialist terms, it is a plea for authenticity. Though why this plea could not be made independently of the doctrine of eternal recurrence is difficult indeed to say. But that doctrine does, Nietzsche seems to feel, rule out the possibility of *another* and *different* life, say in heaven or hell. In place of that view, think how liberating, he argues, the doctrine of eternal return would be. "Let us," he adds, "stamp the form of eternity upon our lives" (*ibid.*, 124). Think, he tells us, "what effect the doctrine of eternal damnation has had!" (*ibid.*, 119). "*This* life is your eternal life" (*ibid.*, 126).

REFLECTIONS ON RECURRENCE:
A RE-EXAMINATION OF NIETZSCHE'S
DOCTRINE, *DIE EWIGE WIEDERKEHR
DES GLEICHEN*

IVAN SOLL

Nietzsche placed a tremendous amount of importance on the idea of eternal recurrence, the doctrine that one's own life, indeed the entire history of the world, has already occurred in all of its details an infinite number of times before and will recur in exactly the same way an infinite number of times in the future. He referred to the idea of eternal recurrence as "the thought of thoughts" (XII, 117) and as "the mightiest of thoughts" (XII, 118). In the retrospective preface to *Zarathustra* included in *Ecce Homo*, he describes eternal recurrence as "the fundamental conception" of *Zarathustra* and as "the highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable" (EH-Z, 1). And he concludes his *Twilight of the Idols* by epitomizing himself as "the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysos . . . the teacher of eternal recurrence."

The pre-eminence Nietzsche accords the doctrine of eternal recurrence is not to be accounted for by his belief that it is demonstrably true and even "the most scientific of all possible hypotheses" (WP, 55), nor by the doctrine's cosmological scope. The importance of the idea of eternal recurrence for Nietzsche is rather to be located in what he took to be the psychological consequences of this cosmological theory, in the human import of this world hypothesis.

Nietzsche's focus on the effect the doctrine would or should have upon those who accept it is reflected by the absence in his published work of any sustained attempt to demonstrate the truth of eternal recurrence. That Nietzsche never published those parts of his notebooks that constitute a putative proof of the doctrine may be, as has been suggested, the result of his dissatisfaction with them. Or perhaps he was simply saving them for inclusion in his planned but never executed book *The Eternal Recurrence*, whose outline includes a section devoted to the "proof of the doctrine" (WP, 1057). In

This article was written especially for this volume. "XII" stands for the twelfth volume of *Nietzsches Werke*, Leipzig, Alfred Kroner Verlag, 1919.

any case, the presentation of eternal recurrence in the published works without any substantive argumentation for its truth indicates that it was not primarily the doctrine's truth or theoretical content that concerned Nietzsche but rather people's attitudes and reactions to this theory.

When Nietzsche introduces the idea of eternal recurrence in *The Gay Science*, in one of the first published references to this idea, the entire question of its veracity is neatly sidestepped by presenting it not as a truth but as a thought experiment:

How, if some day or night, a demon were to sneak after you into your loneliness and say to you: "This life, as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sign . . . must return to you—all in the same succession and sequence—even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned over and over—a dust grain of dust!" Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "you are a god and never did I hear anything more godlike!" If this thought were to gain possession of you, it would change you as you are, or perhaps crush you. The question in each and everything, "do you want this once more and innumerable times more?" would weigh upon your actions as the greatest stress. Or how well disposed you would have to become to yourself and to life to *crave nothing more fervently* than this ultimate eternal confirmation . . . ? (341)

Notice, Nietzsche in no way raises here the issues of whether the demon speaks the truth, whether one in fact believes him, or whether his doctrine of eternal recurrence epistemologically deserves to be believed. Nietzsche is drawn by the distinction between an attitude toward oneself, life and the world that would dispose one to want to reject the doctrine of eternal recurrence no matter how strong or weak the evidence for it might be and an opposite attitude that would dispose one to want to believe it, regardless of its degree of theoretical plausibility. Since whether or not one *wants* to believe that a doctrine is true is not logically tied to whether it is in fact true, whether there is good evidence for its truth, or whether one in fact believes it, Nietzsche need not, and in this context does not, take or argue a position on these latter issues.

However, in addition to the question of whether or not one wants eternal recurrence to be true, Nietzsche thinks that those who did in some way accept the doctrine of eternal recurrence would be profoundly affected. Indeed, it was because Nietzsche held eternal recurrence entails for its adherents more profound and important affects than any other doctrine that he considered it "the thought of thoughts" and "the mightiest of thoughts." As we have just seen, he says in *The Gay Science*: "If this thought were to gain possession of you, it would change you as you are, or perhaps crush you." And he titles this section and the thought experiment it presents "The Greatest Stress," a phrase he uses repeatedly to characterize the doctrine of eternal recurrence. Metaphorically expressing how one's entire view of the world would be altered by the idea of recurrence, Nietzsche writes in his notebooks of 1881-86: "From the moment this thought [eternal recurrence] is there, all colors are changed and history is different" (XII, 120).

It should be noted that Nietzsche does not straightforwardly characterize the acceptance of eternal recurrence, which is supposed to involve such profound consequences, as a belief in the doctrine's truth nor in locutions that clearly entail such belief. In the just cited passages he talks of the thought "gaining possession" of one [*Wenn jener Gedanke über dich Gewalt bekäme . . .*] and of its "being there" [*wo dieser Gedanke da ist*]. In another passage emphasizing the consequences of eternal recurrence he speaks of "incorporating" the idea:

You say that nutrition, location, air and society change and determine you? Well, your opinions do it even more.—If you incorporate the thought of thoughts, it will change you [*Wenn du dir den Gedanken der Gedanken einverleibst, so wird er dich verwandeln*]. (XII, 117).

The use of such epistemologically imprecise notions as a thought's "gaining possession of someone" or "being there [i.e., in someone's mind]" or being "incorporated by someone" is probably intentional. While it is fairly obvious that all of a person's beliefs, not just those that are true or well founded, may involve important psychological consequences for the person who holds them, Nietzsche further suggests that, even if we allow false or poorly founded beliefs to count, one need not believe eternal recurrence to be true in order for the idea to affect us profoundly. He maintains that con-

sidering a doctrine to be probable or even possible could involve important psychological consequences:

Even if the repetition of the cycle is only probable or possible, even the thought of a possibility can deeply move and transform us, not just what we can perceive or definitely expect! What an effect the possibility of eternal damnation has had! (XII, 119).

This important but generally neglected passage from Nietzsche's notebooks sheds light on several questions. First, it shows Nietzsche believed that the consideration of eternal recurrence as probable or even as a mere possibility could have those profound psychological consequences that were at the center of his interest in eternal recurrence. Hence, his use of epistemologically imprecise notions, which can serve to refer indifferently to the attitudes of believing something to be merely possible, or probable, or true, and in each case either with or without adequate justification, can be understood as appropriate to his own position and not merely a case of the careless use of language.

Second, if consideration of the mere possibility of eternal recurrence can psychologically involve "the greatest stress," the importance of any proof of the doctrine's truth is diminished. Given the view expressed in the passage cited, all that is really required is a demonstration of the doctrine's possibility. And Nietzsche may simply have felt that this thesis is so minimal or obvious that no explicit argument is needed; or that with respect to this issue the burden of proof lies upon anyone who wants to claim eternal recurrence to be impossible; or that its bare possibility is implicitly demonstrated by the ostensible coherence of passages like the thought experiment presented in *The Gay Science*. This helps explain the absence of any attempt at such a proof in Nietzsche's published work. The hypothesis that Nietzsche's lack of confidence in the proof he had worked out in his notebooks prevented him from publishing it suffers from the absence of evidence other than the fact that he did not publish it. There is not much in his writings to show he had serious doubts about the soundness of the proof. Furthermore, even if Nietzsche did doubt the soundness of the proof, this would not explain why, particularly if he felt he lacked a convincing proof, he was still willing to introduce the doctrine of eternal recurrence into his published work and accord it such great significance. Surely this state of affairs is to be explained by Nietzsche's view that a proof of eternal recur-

rence is inessential to its significance and not by any qualms he may have had about the soundness of the proof he had developed.

* * *

That Nietzsche took the trouble to work out a proof of eternal recurrence in his unpublished writings is not inconsistent with his view that such a proof is not a necessary condition of the doctrine's significance. Though consideration of the possibility of eternal recurrence might be enough to initiate the psychological consequences the doctrine involves, a convincing argument for its truth would, of course, be the most powerful impetus for effecting these consequences.

Nietzsche's argument for eternal recurrence is based upon two basic metaphysical premises: time is infinite and force (for Nietzsche the basic stuff of the universe) is finite.

Nietzsche holds time to be infinite in the sense that working backward from the present moment one proceeds to infinity without ever reaching a beginning and similarly moving forward one proceeds to infinity without ever reaching an end. He vehemently rejects the notion that time and the world had a beginning an infinitely long time ago:

Lately one has sought several times to find a contradiction in the concept "temporal infinity of the world in the past" (*regressus in infinitum*): one has even found it, although at the cost of confusing the head with the tail. Nothing can prevent me from reckoning backward from this moment and saying "I shall never reach the end"; just as I can reckon forward from the same moment into the infinite. Only if I made the mistake—I shall guard against it—of equating this correct concept of a *regressus in infinitum* with an utterly unrealizable concept of an infinite progressus up to this present, only if I suppose that the direction (forward or backward) is logically a matter of indifference, would I take the head—this moment—for the tail. . . . (WP, 1066)¹

For reasons that are not important to go into here Nietzsche rejected any view of the world as being composed of particles of matter moving in empty space for a view of the world "as a certain definite quantity of force [*Kraft*] and as a certain definite number of centers of force," and he maintained that "every other representation remains indefinite and therefore useless" (WP, 1066). Nietzsche further asserts rather than argues that it is incoherent to consider the force constituting the world to be infinite: "The world as force may not be thought of as unlimited, for it

¹Also see XII, 728.

cannot be so thought of; we forbid ourselves the concept of an infinite force as being incompatible with the concept 'force'" (WP, 1062). And: "The size of the universe's force is limited, nothing 'infinite'; let us beware of such conceptual aberrations" (XII, 90).

From the limited size of the force that constitutes the world Nietzsche infers: "Therefore the number of states, changes, combinations and developments of this force is to be sure enormously large and practically 'immeasurable,' but in any case limited and not infinite" (XII, 90). Given this large but finite number of possible states of the world and an infinite amount of time in the past, Nietzsche concludes that all possible states of the world must have already occurred, so that the present state "must be a repetition and likewise the one which gave birth to it and the one which arises out of it and so on forwards and backwards" (XII, 90).

What, on this account, are finite in number and thus doomed to be repeated over an infinite amount of time are the possible combinations of the totality of forces constituting the entire universe, the possible states of the entire world at a given moment, which Nietzsche sometimes calls "total states" [*Gesammtlagen*]: "Everything has been there innumerable times in as far as the total state of all forces always returns" (XII, 90). But the demon's message that one's entire life repeats itself contains more than the repetition of all momentary states of the world; it implies that entire sequences of such states are repeated. How are we to understand this?

* * *

If one considers only the above argument, with its use of the idiom of probability theory and its reference to the recurrence of all possible states of the world, one gets the impression Nietzsche believed that by a process of *random recombination* of all the forces constituting the world, all possible series of its states would repeat themselves an infinite number of times: the impression that random recombination is operative is strengthened by Nietzsche's reference to the process as "the great dice game of existence" (WP, 1066).

This interpretation is also attractive in that it seems to offer some relief from Georg Simmel's classic refutation of Nietzsche's proof of eternal recurrence.² Simmel argues that there could be a world composed of a finite number of elements

² Simmel, Georg, *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche: Ein Vortragszyklus*, Leipzig, 1907, pp. 250-51.

in which a certain configuration would not be repeated even over an infinite amount of time. He asks us to imagine three wheels of the same size on a common axle, each wheel marked at a point on its circumference, and the points aligned along a thread stretched above the wheels. If the wheels are rotated at speeds of n , $2n$ and n/π , they will turn forever without returning to the initial condition of alignment under the thread. Simmel concludes:

If, therefore, there exist anywhere in the world three movements that correspond in their relationships to these three wheels, then the combinations among them can never return to their initial form. Finitude in the number of elements does not at all necessarily insure, even if there is an infinite amount of time for their movements, that the situation of any moment is repeated unchanged.—Naturally, the case could be different. The movements of the world could be so arranged that they run through an ever repeating cycle of combinations. But the bare possibility just sketched suffices to show the putative proof for the eternal return to be an illusion.

Simmel's refutation depends upon the possibility of patterns of recombinations being regulated so that certain repetitions are ruled out, but, if Nietzsche did indeed hold that the recombination was random, Simmel's argument would lose some of its force.

However, Nietzsche's use of the idiom of probability theory in more than one presentation of his proof, his saying that "in infinite time, every possible combination would at some time or another be realized" (WP, 1066), is not to be taken at face value. For, intertwined with his talk of "the great dice game of existence" and "the realization of every possible combination" we find the expression of a determinism that is at odds with the idea that changes in the world are to be understood on the model of a dice game and that makes it difficult to interpret Nietzsche as straightforwardly holding that every possible combination will in fact be realized.

Zarathustra says: "And are not all things knotted together so firmly that this moment draws after it *all* that is to come? Therefore—itself too?" (Third Part, "On the Vision and the Riddle"). And: "But the knot of causes in which I am entangled recurs and will create me again" (Third Part, "The Convalescent"). In the very same section (1066) of *The Will to Power* that speaks of "the great dice game of existence" we find: "each of these combinations conditions the entire sequence of combinations in the same series." And

Nietzsche enjoins us to "believe in the absolute necessity in the universe [*im All*]" (XII, 107).

Nietzsche believes each total state of the world at a particular moment determines the next one and thus indirectly the entire series or cycle. Given this strict determinism, the recurrence of a total state or *Gesammtlage* defines a full cycle because the same total state must determine the same series to recur, and "a circular movement of absolutely identical series is demonstrated" (WP, 1066). Without the postulation of this determinism, it could still be argued that all possible states recur an infinite number of times and even all possible series of states. On the postulation of random recombination of the elements of the world, as well as on the postulation of determinism, there will be, in the words of the demon, "this life, as you now live it and have lived it . . . once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it . . . all in the same succession and sequence." However, the consequences of the argument for eternal recurrence still differ crucially depending upon whether or not determinism is postulated. If determinism is not postulated the argument shows—if it does show anything—that *all possible* momentary states and series of states are repeated, but it does not show that the same series of states is repeated each time. Appealing only to the finitude of possible combinations, the infinity of time and random recombination, one gets not only the repetitions of one's life as one now lives it with nothing new in it but also the eternal recurrence of all possible variants of one's present life and all possible variants of world history. Thus, "a circular movement of absolutely identical series" would not be demonstrated.

Nietzsche clearly believes that one state of the entire world completely determines the next and holds the resultant view that exactly the same series of states is repeated each time in a circular pattern. But if he believes this, what sense is to be given his assertion that "In infinite time, every possible combination would at some time or another be realized; more: it would be realized an infinite number of times" (WP, 1066)? The vast majority of logically possible combinations, namely those which constitute *variants* of this life as you now live it or of world history as it is now taking place, would occur only if determinism and the resultant exclusive recurrence of one's present life and the current history of the world were not operative. Subscribing to determinism as he does, it seems that Nietzsche cannot with consistency maintain that

literally "every possible combination would at some time or another be realized."

In order to reconcile Nietzsche's allegiance to determinism with the claim that every possible combination is realized, we must interpret "all possible combinations" to refer not to all the logically possible combinations, but only to all those that can occur in the one determined eternally recurring series. Thus when Nietzsche says that "between every combination and its next recurrence all other possible combinations would have to take place" (WP, 1066), he cannot mean that all conceivable combinations take place, but only all of that subset of the logical possibilities that constitute the history of the world as it *actually* occurs and recurs eternally.

Nietzsche's use of the notion of "all possible combinations," when it is not clear that he does mean and quite clear that he should not mean all logically possible combinations, is misleading and probably somewhat confused. When he talks of "all *possible* combinations" he seems to be really referring only to all *actual* combinations.

In criticizing the second law of thermodynamics, the law of entropy, which predicts, contrary to Nietzsche's vision of eternal recurrence and change, the eventual cessation of change in a state of undifferentiated equilibrium, Nietzsche is, in fact, forced to draw a distinction between what is logically possible and what is actually possible in this world where all is determined, i.e., what is actually the case, the very distinction whose general absence confuses his presentation of the doctrine of eternal recurrence.

Nietzsche's criticism of the law of entropy is a corollary of his argument for eternal recurrence. According to the argument, given an infinite amount of time in the past and a finite number of possible states of the universe, every state that will occur in the future has already occurred in the past.³ Thus: "If the world could in any way become rigid, dry, dead, *nothing*, or if it could reach a state of equilibrium, or if it had any kind of goal that involved duration, immutability, the once-and-for-all (in short, speaking metaphysically: if becoming could resolve itself into being or nothingness), then this state must have been reached" (WP, 1066). But Nietzsche argues: "Had an equilibrium of forces ever once been reached, it would still be the case. Thus, it has never

³ Notice, this formulation, which is my own, provides a way of stating the argument without committing oneself on the issue of whether all logically possible states have been and will be recurring.

occurred. The present situation [of change] contradicts that assumption" (XII, 103).⁴

By this argument Nietzsche thinks he has defended his thesis of eternal change and refuted modern theoretical mechanics on this issue: "If the mechanistic theory cannot avoid the consequence, drawn for it by William Thomson, of leading to a final state, then the mechanistic theory stands refuted" (WP, 1066).

Nietzsche's discussion of the possibility of such a final state displays a clear growth in the clarity and sophistication of his use of the concept of possibility. He begins this discussion in his notebooks by saying: "Were the cessation of activity [*der Stillstand*] possible, then it would have occurred" (XII, 100). Here again one cannot unproblematically interpret "possible" to mean logically possible, for it is not at all clear or even argued that a cessation of activity is logically impossible.

Perhaps sensing this problem, in the very next note Nietzsche becomes somewhat uncertain about denying the possibility of a state of equilibrium: "Complete equilibrium must either be an impossibility in itself, or the changes of power begin the cycle before that equilibrium, which is in itself possible, has occurred" (XII, 101). This passage seems to reflect an awareness on Nietzsche's part that he has not shown a state of equilibrium to be logically impossible, and also that he need not show this for his argument against the law of entropy.

Nietzsche's awareness of difficulties connected with his ill-defined use of the notion of possibility culminates a few passages later when he draws a distinction between what is (logically or conceptually) possible and what is actually the case. And with this sharpening of his notion of possibility comes a reversal of judgment concerning the possibility, now clearly in the standard logical sense, of a state of equilibrium: "The cessation of activity of the powers, their equilibrium, is a conceivable case, but it has not occurred. It follows that the number of possibilities [*Möglichkeiten*] is greater than that of the actualities [*Wirklichkeiten*] (XII, 103). If Nietzsche had rectified his other discussions of eternal recurrence in accordance with the insight and con-

⁴ The argumentative structure of Nietzsche's proof for the doctrine of eternal recurrence is in general, but particularly at this juncture, strikingly similar to that of Thomas Aquinas' third proof for God's existence. See *The Summa Theologica*, Q. 2, Art. 3, "Whether God Exists."

ceptual apparatus developed in this passage, he would not have continued to claim that "in infinite time, all possible combinations would be realized."

Perhaps Nietzsche's general lack of clarity concerning the concept of possibility is responsible for the absence of any indication that he was aware of how crucially important is the introduction of determinism and the resultant exclusion of the occurrence of all logically possible combinations to the purported psychological significance of his theory. Without the postulation of determinism Nietzsche's argument appealing to the infinity of time and finitude of possible combinations of the world's elements would have as its natural conclusion the eternal recurrence of all logically possible states of the world and all logically possible series of such states. Consequently, not just your life as you now live it and world history as it is occurring in this cycle would have occurred an infinite number of times in the past and would recur an infinite number of times in the future, but all possible variants of your present life and the world's present history. This version of eternal recurrence would not invest this life as you now live it with any special stress or significance, for, although you are condemned, on this version of eternal recurrence, to relive this life an infinite number of times, the same is true for all logically possible variants of this life. Regarding any choice of action the doctrine of eternal recurrence commits you to repeat this choice *ad infinitum*, with the result that all one's choices seem to acquire added import. But this version of the doctrine commits you to repeat *ad infinitum* all the logically possible alternative choices in every decision situation, *no matter how you now choose*, with the result that one's choices, instead of being invested with greater significance, as Nietzsche intended, would be robbed of significance. If Nietzsche had clearly seen this crucial consequence of the eternal recurrence of all logically possible combinations, he would probably have been much more chary of repeatedly claiming that all possible combinations are realized and repeated—no matter what sense of possibility he had in mind.

If eternal recurrence without determinism seems to undermine the significance of human choice and action, the introduction of determinism to the theory poses a similar problem. If, when confronted by what is ordinarily considered to be a decision, one's choice, being part of a state of the world, is determined by the previous state, and one's

choice must also conform exactly to an infinite number of counterparts in earlier cycles, is there really any choice to be made or action to be taken? The classical problem, that the acceptance of determinism apparently undermines the meaningfulness or applicability of such concepts as free will, choice and action, is particularly acute for a proponent of Nietzsche's theory of eternal recurrence. First, in addition to the usual determination of choice by its precedents within the cycle, there is the added determination of choice by its correlates in all previous cycles. Second, the undermining of the significance of the concepts of choice and action is particularly problematic for a theory one of whose purposes is to increase our sense of the significance of the choices we make.

Nietzsche is aware of this problem: "But if everything is necessary, what in my actions can I determine?" (XII, 117). He responds by simply taking the position that determinism is not incompatible with the idea that we actually make choices and initiate actions. He considered his theory "the completion of fatalism" (XIII, 186) but also considered "free will as nothing but fate to the highest power." Nietzsche's "I myself am fate and condition existence from all eternity" (XII, 399) and his dictum that "before fate strikes us, we should guide it" (XII, 504) seem to be written from the standpoint that determinism and meaningful human choice and action are compatible. Though this is the position Nietzsche has to take if his theory of eternal recurrence is to have the psychological consequence he wanted it to have, i.e., the consequence of enhancing the import of our decisions and actions, he provides little or no justification for adopting this compatibilist position. Yet ultimately the soundness of drawing the consequence he wants to draw is dependent upon the soundness of his compatibilist position.

These consequences of the deterministic aspect of Nietzsche's theory point up a basic dilemma confronting the theory: determinism excludes the insignificance our actions would acquire if all logically possible combinations recurred eternally only to raise the specter of the same insignificance by apparently undermining the meaningfulness and applicability of the very concept of action.

Determinism comes into play in yet another important way in the doctrine of eternal recurrence. Since, according to Nietzsche's deterministic thesis, "each . . . combination [of the world's elements at a given moment] conditions the entire sequence of combinations in the same series" (WP,

1066), it follows that "If only a moment of the world returns—said the lightning—then everything must return" (XII, 724). And since any human life is a part of the completely determined series of combinations that constitutes a world cycle, "Whoever wants to have a single experience again, must wish to have them all again" (XII, 725).

Taken literally, this last claim is false; someone may, of course, want only a particular experience to recur. But anyone who accepts Nietzsche's deterministic thesis realizes that a particular experience can recur only if the entire cycle of world history recurs. Only in as far as such a person's desires are consonant with his belief in determinism and its consequences must his desire to have a particular experience recur entail a desire that the entire cycle of world history recur. The same sort of reading must be given the following oft cited passage from "The Drunken Song" in the Fourth Part of *Zarathustra*:

Have you ever said Yes to a single joy? O my friends, then you have said Yes too to *all* woe. All things are entangled, ensnared, enamored: if you ever wanted one thing twice, if you ever said, "You please me, happiness. Abide, moment!" then you wanted all back.

The thesis, that to affirm anything by wishing its return entails—in the sense just outlined—affirming everything by wishing its return, is reinforced by certain special aspects of Nietzsche's concept of determinism. Nietzsche maintains not only that each state of the world determines the next but also that nothing could be exactly what it is if anything else in the world contemporary with it or anything in the entire history of its genesis were at all different. This idea is implied by Nietzsche's argument that no two things could be identical unless they were embedded in identical world contexts and had identical geneses:

It seems that the total state forms the properties anew down to the smallest detail, so that two different total states cannot contain anything identical. Can there be in one total state something identical, for example, two leaves? I doubt it; it would assume that they had an absolutely identical genesis, and with that we would have to assume that backwards through all eternity there has been something identical despite all the changes in the total state and the creation of new properties—an impossible assumption (XII, 90).

For Nietzsche, all the relations between a single phenomenon and the rest of the world and its history are *intrinsic*

to the character and identity of that phenomenon: "Don't you know that? In every action you perform, the history of all that happens is repeated and abbreviated" (XII, 726). No individual phenomenon, no individual experience or action has an identity apart from its particular position in the entire cycle of world history. Thus, the idea of affirming a single experience by wishing only it to return is, in Nietzsche's theory, metaphysically incoherent.

* * *

Usually, when it is claimed that history repeats itself, what is meant is that generally similar patterns of events tend to recur within the course of history. Nietzsche holds that history repeats itself in an entirely different sense. As we have seen, he holds recurrence, by which he means recurrence of *identical* events and patterns of events, to be impossible within the course of history, but inevitable from one cycle of history to another, as one cycle of history is completely and identically repeated by another. In order for a state of affairs to be an *identical* recurrence of an earlier one, it cannot contain any memory of or reference to the earlier one. There can be no continuity of consciousness, memory or record (including any system of dating) that transcends a single cycle. According to Nietzsche's theory, when I am again writing this essay in the next cycle of recurrence, it will be once more A.D. 1972 and I shall have no memory of having written it before. Nietzsche's eternal recurrence takes place in time but not in history, that is, not in known history as a phenomenon of the collective consciousness of mankind.⁵

Walter Kaufmann calls attention to the supra-historical character of Nietzsche's version of eternal recurrence; he cites Nietzsche's rejection of the Pythagorean version of recurrence in the second *Meditation* because it was to take place within the span of history, and he justly criticizes Karl

⁵ Nietzsche's prevalent and most profound position is that eternal recurrence is and can only be supra-historical. But in one place, perhaps carried away by the momentum of his own metaphors, he reflects upon recurrence as if it were a phenomenon that occurs within the span of a single life: "And this slow spider, which crawls in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and I and you in the gateway . . . whispering of eternal things—must not all of us have been there before? . . . Then suddenly I heard a dog howl nearby. Had I ever heard a dog howl like this? My thoughts raced back. Yes, when I was a child, in the most distant childhood; then I heard a dog howl like this" (*Zarathustra*, Third Part, "On the Vision and the Riddle"). This passage and its suggestion of an intra-historical dimension of eternal recurrence should be viewed as aberrant and ill-considered.

Löwith's misguided attempt to interpret the doctrine historically. But Kaufmann ironically fails to see one of the important implications of the doctrine's supra-historical character.⁶

In addressing himself to the relation between the Nietzschean concepts of eternal recurrence and the *Übermensch*, Kaufmann is surely right in stressing their compatibility and interdependence. One important, and perhaps definitive, criterion of the *Übermensch* or the overman, Nietzsche's ideal, is that he will be able to meet the demon's challenge and "crave nothing more fervently than the ultimate eternal confirmation" of recurrence. Kaufmann is also clearly correct in maintaining that Nietzsche explicitly denied the overman was something that was to evolve and vociferously attacked the idea of progress and any reading of Darwinism that implied it.⁷ But Kaufmann errs when he claims that "only the common evolutionary misconstruction of the overman involves an inconsistency with the doctrine of eternal recurrence."⁸ For, although the idea of general progress, any version of evolutionary theory that implies progress, or any evolutionary construal of the overman are inimical to Nietzsche's views, none of these ideas is necessarily inconsistent with his doctrine of eternal recurrence.

Since eternal recurrence is a supra-historical phenomenon, it is consistent with the idea of any historical pattern. Without contradicting his theory of eternal recurrence, Nietzsche could have held, though in fact he did not, that throughout the entire course of history there is general and inevitable progress; that throughout each entire cycle of recurrence there is improvement of all species through the process of evolution; and that within the span of known history the

⁶ Kaufmann, Walter, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1950. Third rev. ed., New York, Vintage Books, 1968, p. 319. Argument against the Pythagorean theory in *Untimely Meditations II, Of the Uses and Disadvantages of History*, sec. 2. Löwith, Karl, *Nietzsches Philosophie der Ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, Berlin, Die Runde, 1935. Rev. ed., Stuttgart, Kohlhammer 1956, ch. IV.

⁷ "The goal of humanity cannot lie in the end but only in its highest specimens." *Untimely Meditations II, Of the Uses and Disadvantages of History*, sec. 9.

My general views.—*First proposition*: man as a species is not progressing. Higher types are indeed attained, but they do not last. The level of the species is not raised.

Among men, too, the higher types, the lucky strokes of evolution, perish most easily as fortunes change. (WP, 684)

⁸ Kaufmann, pp. 319–20.

overman will gradually evolve and eventually appear en masse.⁹

It is perhaps easier to see the compatibility of eternal recurrence with any theory of historical progress if we realize that the issue is more generally whether a theory that posits a supra-historical pattern of cyclical repetition is compatible with any theory that posits a historical pattern of linear development. Not only is such a historical theory compatible with supra-historical recurrence, but there is some evidence that Nietzsche, "the teacher of eternal recurrence," himself taught such a theory. To be sure, Nietzsche did not believe that the human species would improve through evolution, but he seems to have believed that on the whole it would degenerate. His picture of "the last man" in the "Prologue" to *Zarathustra* embodies a theory of value-negative linear development through a historical process of evolution:

Alas, the time is coming when man will no longer give birth to a star. Alas, the time of the most despicable man is coming, he that is no longer able to despise himself. Behold I show you the *last man*.

What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star? thus asks the last man, and he blinks.

The earth has become small, and on it hops the last man, who makes everything small. His race is as ineradicable as the flea-beetle; the last man lives longest.

Though, as Kaufmann rightly argues, Nietzsche's conception of the overman is not evolutionary, this is not true of Nietzsche's conception of the overman's foil, the last man. But even though the conception of the last man is evolutionary, it is not inconsistent with the doctrine of eternal recurrence; and even if the conception of the overman were evolutionary it would not be inconsistent with this doctrine. There only seems to be an inconsistency if one accepts the specious problematic that Kaufmann shares with those of his opponents who think recurrence and the overman are incompatible.

* * *

⁹ Admittedly, eternal recurrence is not compatible with the idea of a progress that is infinite or transcends individual cycles. But neither Darwinism nor the thesis of general and inevitable progress in history nor an evolutionary construal of the overman requires the postulation of such progress.

The idea of eternal recurrence seemed to Nietzsche "the most difficult thought" (WP, 1059) because of both what he took to be its cosmological and personal implications.

On the cosmological level, Nietzsche argues, the doctrine precludes that the universe has meaning in that it precludes any evolution toward some ideal final state or meaningful goal. "Duration 'in vain' without end or aim, is the most paralyzing idea." "Let us think this thought in its most terrible form: existence as it is, without meaning or aim, yet recurring inevitably without any finale of nothingness: 'the eternal recurrence'" (WP, 55).

The argument for eternal recurrence certainly precludes the possibility of any absolutely final state and thus the attainment of any absolutely final ideal state or absolutely final goal. However, this idea appears somewhat less paralyzing if we—unlike Nietzsche—keep in mind that the doctrine of eternal recurrence itself does not preclude the possibility that each cycle end by reaching an ideal state or realizing a goal. To be sure, this state could be "final" only in that it was the last in the cycle, and there would always be further repetitions of the cycle. If the world, however, achieved an ideal end state or goal in each historical cycle, it would not simply be a case of "duration in vain." The entire development of each cycle would exhibit a meaningful pattern. And one might derive great metaphysical comfort from the thought of the successful pattern of fulfillment displayed and repeated in each cycle.

Nietzsche saw, of course, no reason to believe that the course of history within a cycle displayed any such meaningful development, but whether there actually is "reason in history"—to use Hegel's phrase for a meaningful teleological pattern within history—is a separate question, one not affected by the truth or falsity of the doctrine of recurrence. The supra-historical character of recurrence, by leaving open the possibility of any kind of meaning within the cycle of history, is, contrary to Nietzsche's conclusion, not "the most extreme form of nihilism; the nothing (the 'meaningless'), eternally" (WP, 55). It also allows the "meaningful" to be repeated eternally.¹⁰

On the personal level the doctrine provides us with the diffi-

¹⁰ Apart from the question of whether eternal recurrence allows history to have a meaning, the recurrence of all of world history tends to distress Zarathustra because: "Alas, man recurs eternally! The small man recurs eternally." "And the eternal recurrence even of the smallest—that was my disgust with all existence" (Third Part, "The Convalescent").

cult thought that we are condemned to repeat eternally our present lives in all details. Regarding the message of the demon in *The Gay Science* that "this life, as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live . . . innumerable times more," Nietzsche asks: "Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus?" The psychological stress stems from the thought that one must repeat the unpleasant aspects of one's life, the defeats, mistakes, failures and pain. Although Nietzsche mentions, in this passage from *The Gay Science*, the return of "every pain and every joy and every thought," it is surely the idea of repeating the pain, not the joy, that makes this "the most difficult of thoughts." Nietzsche writes in a note, "To *endure* the idea of recurrence one needs . . . new means against the fact of *pain* (pain conceived as a tool, as the father of pleasure)" (WP, 1060). The idea seems to be that one has a tendency to curse and gnash one's teeth upon considering eternal recurrence, because on this theory, the pain, failure, etc. one has experienced and will experience in this life is repeated and thus increased infinitely. In the eternal repetition of our frustrations and tortures, each of us appears to suffer like a Sisyphus or Tantalus. If you are able to see that the unpleasant aspects of your present life are necessary for the pleasant and that pain is the father of pleasure, and if you are able to affirm joyously the totality of your life, then the idea of its infinite repetition will seem "godlike" and you will "crave nothing more fervently." On the other hand, if you cannot affirm your present life, its eternal recurrence would be equivalent to your eternal damnation.

Contrary to Nietzsche, however, I believe the prospect of the infinite repetition of the pleasure or pain of one's present life entailed by the doctrine of eternal recurrence should actually be a matter of complete indifference.¹¹ To see why this somewhat counterintuitive conclusion is the case, one should consider the nature of the identity between oneself in the present cycle and oneself in any other cycle. One's recurrence in another cycle is perfectly identical with one's present self in that the physical and psychological career, the experiences and position in the general history of the cycle of each recurrence of the person are qualitatively identical.

Since for this kind of identity to hold the mental lives of each of the recurrences of a person must be exactly the same,

¹¹ My position is similar to Georg Simmel's but developed somewhat differently. See Simmel, p. 251 ff.

there can be no accumulation of experience from one recurrence to the next. A person can have no direct memories of earlier recurrences. If he did, the increment of his mental life would make him different from his predecessors and hence not an identical recurrence of them.

Inorganic matter, even if it was 'mostly organic, has learned nothing, is always without a past. Were it otherwise, then there could never be a repetition—for something would always arise from matter with new qualities, with a new past. (XII, 108).

By excluding any direct mental links that lead to an accumulation of experience among the different recurrences of a person, the doctrine of eternal recurrence makes it impossible for there to be among different recurrences of a person the kind of identity that seems to exist among the different states of consciousness of the same person within a particular recurrence. Recurrences of the consciousness of a person in different cycles are not linked the way the different states of consciousness of a person within a cycle are linked. Neither the linkage of memory stressed by Hume, nor the related notion of unity in one consciousness that struck Kant as the connection among states of consciousness responsible for personal identity, is operative among different recurrences of a person.

I want to suggest that only if the recurrences of one's life were linked to one's present life as different states of consciousness are united in one consciousness should one have any personal concern about the prospect of one's present pleasures or pains recurring. If I am concerned about the possibility of suffering pain later in this life, it is because those future states of consciousness in which I might suffer pain are united with my present state of consciousness. And this unity depends, at least in part and in some complex manner, upon there being linkages of memory among these states of consciousness. Since I am not connected to my recurrence in another cycle by being united with him in one consciousness through links of memory, I am not identical to him in the sense necessary for me to view his suffering pain tantamount to my suffering further pain. Only by inappropriately construing the suffering of some future recurrence on the model of suffering later in this life does the question of the eternal recurrence of one's pain weigh upon one with "the greatest stress."

Arthur Danto suggests that one might be *justifiably* horrified at the demon's message because it implies that:

There is no possibility for any ultimate novelty in the universe. It has all been thought of before (if only by yourself), and will all be thought of again (if only by yourself). This might cause some consternation: one might recall Mill's sadness at the idea that there is only a finite number of musical combinations, so that all the musical combinations would someday be exhausted. The pleasure of anticipating great new combinations would be lost. The idea of finitude seemed inimical to, and incompatible with, the possibility of true creation.¹²

Danto's interpretation gives us yet another example of an inappropriate attempt to draw from a strictly supra-historical aspect of the doctrine of eternal recurrence psychological consequences that really follow only from a historical correlative not entailed by the doctrine. The doctrine of recurrence excludes novelty only in the sense that whatever occurs has already occurred in a previous cycle. But eternal recurrence is compatible with novelty within the context of a single cycle, within the historical span of the cumulative consciousness of mankind. And it is only this novelty within history and within the span of human consciousness that is of real concern. Is it eternal recurrence or the existence of predecessors in classical antiquity that shows Copernicus' heliocentric view not to be novel in any sense that tends to lead to a reassessment of his achievement? After all, eternal recurrence does not claim that anyone *else* developed the theory before him. And is the creativity of Leonardo da Vinci, who died about four and a half centuries ago, undermined by predecessors in worlds excluded by definition from his and our historical consciousness?

The case of J. S. Mill, cited by Danto, is instructive. Actually, Mill was not distressed merely by the thought that someday all musical combinations would be exhausted, but also by the thought that most of the beautiful combinations must have already been discovered. In any case, Mill was concerned about the prospects for the continued *experience* of musical novelty. The lack of novelty in our experience results in monotony and boredom, about which one might justifiably be concerned. But since eternal recurrence precludes novelty only in positing predecessors that are by definition beyond the reach of our individual and collective memories, the repetitiousness of all events it postulates can never be experienced and thus cannot produce monotony. Danto's conclusion that the theory

¹² Danto, Arthur, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, New York, Macmillan, 1964, p. 210.

of eternal recurrence entails "an eternal monotony" is confused and misleading.¹³

In addition to what he took to be the "paralyzing thought" of repeating the frustration and pain of this life eternally, Nietzsche held that the doctrine of eternal recurrence put "the greatest stress" on all of one's decisions. "The question, in everything you want to do: 'Is it such that I want to do it innumerable times?', is the greatest stress" (XII, 117). Whether the doctrine of eternal recurrence actually places the greatest stress on all decisions is thrown into question by two criticisms already presented. First, the doctrine's deterministic aspect threatens to undermine the idea that we really have any decisions to make, and Nietzsche does little to remove this threat. Second, for the same reasons that I have argued the infinite recurrence of the pain of my present life is a matter of indifference to me, so is the recurrence of my decisions.

Since Nietzsche believed that the psychological consequences of the doctrine of eternal recurrence for those who consider it at least possible are more important than the demonstration of its truth, I have concentrated on those consequences. My general conclusion is that what appears to be the momentous human import of the doctrine is negated by its supra-historical character, which removes its consequences beyond the possible limits of the individual human consciousness and the cumulative historical consciousness of mankind.

¹³ *Ibid.* Nietzsche himself, it seems, would reject this consequence that Danto draws from eternal recurrence;

Let us guard against attributing any striving or goal to this cyclical course, or to depreciate it according to our needs as monotonous, stupid, etc. (XII, 109)

NIETZSCHE AND ETERNAL RECURRENCE

ARNOLD ZUBOFF

Nietzsche believed he could show that the course of the world after any given moment ultimately led back to that moment in a ring of eternal recurrence. All the moments of any man's life, then, must forever return. Nietzsche wrote that accepting this idea, that you must live just the life you live now again and again without end, "would change you as you are, or perhaps crush you. The question in each and everything, 'do you want this once more and innumerable times more?' would weigh upon your actions as the greatest stress."¹ Now, Nietzsche's grand project was just such a "revaluation of all values"—exalting the struggle for personal excellence in this life—as, according to the above quote, must come with a man's acceptance of the idea of recurrence. Yet for most of the explicit discussion of the recurrence in Nietzsche's work we must look to the short concluding section of *The Will to Power*, the posthumous collection of sketchy and fragmentary notes to which we are forced to turn throughout this paper. Does this imply that in the occasional allusions to the recurrence, in which Nietzsche is always stressing its enormous importance, he exaggerated its relevance to his project of revaluation? I don't think so.

For there are two features of the recurrence doctrine that do give it immense significance for revaluation. One is that it renders the world basically aimless and impersonal. It is only against the background of such a world, empty of extra-

This article was written especially for this volume.

¹ This is to be found in Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*, sec. 341. I quote it as it was translated by Walter Kaufmann in his *Nietzsche* (3rd ed. rev.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1968), p. 324. The forthcoming discussion of the relation of the recurrence doctrine to Nietzsche's project of revaluation presupposes the correctness of something like that interpretation of Nietzsche's revaluation that Kaufmann gives in his *Nietzsche*. It is to Nietzsche's revaluation so interpreted that I shall be pointing with such phrases as "exaltation of the moment" and "striving for excellence." In the chapter "Overman and Eternal Recurrence" Kaufmann shows that a consideration of his view of the revaluation can reveal that vital connection between revaluation and recurrence which Nietzsche so enthusiastically celebrates—to the puzzlement of most Nietzsche scholars.

personal meaning, that Nietzsche's project of revaluation can take shape. But does this make recurrence *per se* important? Another doctrine, for instance that the world will eventually run down through entropy, might seem to match that of recurrence in its prediction of aimlessness. But, Nietzsche writes, "let us think this thought in its most terrible form, existence as it is, without meaning or aim, yet recurring inevitably without any finale of nothingness: '*the eternal recurrence.*'"² For Nietzsche, then, the specific concept of recurrence is the "most terrible form" of the idea of extra-personal meaninglessness on which his other work ultimately depends.

The other feature of eternal recurrence that gives it significance for revaluation is that in it a man lives countless times the same life. Nietzsche wished desperately to avoid the devaluation of this life, the feeling of its transitoriness, that would have been encouraged by the denial of a next world without such an assertion of the recurrence of the life of this world.³ The recurrence is a positive doctrine of an afterlife, and as such it is even more powerful than the Christian for getting men to change their values in the desired way once they have accepted the doctrine. As in the Christian, in the Nietzschean afterlife a person shall be eternally rewarded or punished according to the values by which he had lived. But in the Nietzschean afterlife the eternal return of the quality of this life is at once reward or punishment for success or failure in developing the value of this life as Nietzsche advises. And so, whereas Christian values are external to the Christian doctrine of the afterlife in the sense that one could keep that idea that there will be reward and punishment while changing the values that supposedly will decide their application by the final judge, the Nietzschean notion of the reliving of this life actually has inherent in it the definition of the decisive values—those Nietzschean values discovered in the exaltation of the moment.

Acceptance of this doctrine of the repeating afterlife, then, forces the believer to live by Nietzsche's values and defines those values. As a personal experience such an acceptance brings with it the flames of a hell of eternal despair to those who know themselves damned in their weakness, but, as it did to Nietzsche, the greatest joy to those who know they can live joyously this life. Nietzsche expected the changing of some,

² Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), sec. 55.

³ *Ibid.*, sec. 1065.

the crushing of most, when the idea of recurrence swept the world as he felt it would.⁴

Like a Christian writer of casuistry, Nietzsche in his finished work happened to have engaged primarily in what amounts to working out the consequences of an afterlife doctrine rather than in discussing that doctrine explicitly. Yet the importance to his project of that idea made explicit leads me to respect the authority of those indications published in the 1911 manuscript of *The Will to Power* that he was eventually going to write a book on the recurrence.⁵ I believe he had put off its writing on account of serious difficulties in the idea and its proof as we see them sketched, which in part stem from the need for his first working out and presenting what I call his metaphysics (also, like the recurrence doctrine, merely sketched in *The Will to Power*), upon which I believe he was very heavily relying as a precondition for his version of recurrence.

Although I myself agree with Nietzsche that the idea of the recurrence, once generally accepted, could be a fountainhead for that change in mankind for which he hoped, I think the idea is weak in two important ways. One is that his proof is unconvincing and even self-defeating at various points; this we shall soon consider.

The other is that there is a fascinating difficulty in the notion that the same man can come about again after he has died and re-experience moments that have already been his. Nietzsche seemed to rest easy with drawing the personal implications of recurrence that way. Actually, there are several alternative ways of interpreting the situation.

The Personal Meaning of Recurrence— Three Interpretations

The first of these that we shall consider is the suggestion that the recurrence of a life means not the repetition and return of the same man, but rather the generation of a series of men, each a mere duplicate of the last. This I shall name the "insulating" treatment, because according to it, since those men in repetition are not numerically the same, their individual fates are as little shared as those of more obviously different creatures—their lives and concerns are in this sense insulated from one another.

⁴ *Ibid.*, secs. 1053–59, *et passim*.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sec. 1057n.

All this hinges on the settlement of what can be seen as an Aristotelian sort of issue, about properly categorizing a man, a life, a moment. Is a man or his life understood best as a thing in some category of things that will get repeated in a recurrence (like patterns or doings), get only duplicated in recurrence (like individual objects), or perhaps get neither repeated nor duplicated but rather instantiated (like universals)?

The reason Nietzsche rejected or did not even consider the insulating theory perhaps can be found, then, in his metaphysics, in the way he was predisposed to resolve the Aristotelian sort of issue.

Nietzsche rejected any metaphysical notion that holds that there are real, objective entities or individuals—that there is anything beyond doings and patterns of doings. Lightning, he points out in *The Genealogy of Morals* and elsewhere, is not really, as our language suggests, a subject—lightning—which performs a doing—flashing. It is rather only the flashing. In *The Will to Power* we see him extending this analysis to all supposed subjects and their doings. He ends denying the objective reality of all proposed subjects, like atoms and egos, and talking of all beings rather in terms of arrangements or patterns of force, of power quanta, of doings.⁶ (And these are manifestations of the will to power.)

And yet, even though he thus had rejected the notion of an objectively real ego or body or any other kind of reality for a man beyond that of his experiences and doings, one might conceive of a Nietzsche insisting with the insulators that only a single occurrence of a particular sequence of such experiences and doings, i.e., only a single occurrence of a life, was to count as a particular man's existence. But it seems to me that a philosopher like Nietzsche who did not believe in an objectively existing ego or material body would be quite disinclined so to rule with the insulators against a man's repeatability. Since Nietzsche held that a particular man was ultimately only a particular pattern of doings, one should probably have expected him to accept as he did a man's repeatability—and to accept it with the same ease as that with which we all accept the repeatability of a melody (at least in our ordinary discourse)—which is usually identified also as a pattern, in this case of tones. The Buddha too, for whom a man was just a pattern of sensations and matter, believed in rein-

⁶ *Ibid.*, secs. 338–39, 635–36, *et passim*.

carnation through repetition. (A strict materialist who identifies a man not with his bodily continuity, say, but with the general pattern or arrangement of his atoms could agree with Nietzsche about repeatability.)

Perhaps, then, here, as elsewhere, we must appeal to what we know of Nietzsche's metaphysical inclinations and theories to round out our understanding of what the recurrence was for him.

The other anti-Nietzschean interpretation of the recurrence that we shall consider grants that the recurrences bring back the same man. In fact, when it comes to discussing lives and experiences, it outdoes Nietzsche in this insistence on sameness and insists that the "repeating" experience of this same man does not actually repeat, since it too is numerically the same. Just as the man is no additional man, his life's experience does not count as anything like an additional experience. This is an application of something resembling Leibniz's Law of the Identity of Indiscernibles, and for this reason only we shall call this interpretation the "Leibnizian."

For the Leibnizian each time your life recurs identically there can be no addition to your present experience represented in that recurrence. But this idea is not the same as the insulator's—that the other lives, being other than yours, do not touch yours. It is rather the opposite. The idea is that your present experience is now, at once, *each of all* those infinite identical experiences promised by Nietzsche in eternal recurrence—that this now is all such nows, all such nows are this now—that there is no meaning to talk about *this* occurrence as distinguished from another precisely similar since for you, to whom the demonstrative is addressed as referring to your moment, they are all the same, indiscernible. All occupy the same personal space and time.

This Leibnizian interpretation of recurrence makes experience unlike a doing, a pattern. It removes experience from the category Nietzsche placed it in—that into which most people put the repeatable melody. Experience is treated by the Leibnizian rather as the universal was treated by Aristotle. Whenever and wherever a particular defined the existence of a universal, it was the same numerically—the same timelessly. Perhaps it is natural to think of things like numbers this way. The number three seems ever the same thing throughout its countless instantiations. Nietzsche the metaphysician, however, would deny any ultimate place in the world to such a proposed category of things as the universal, just as he had denied any

to the category of individual objects. And so he would deny that experience could have the ultimate character the Leibnizian claims it has. For Nietzsche everything is ultimately a repeatable doing or pattern of doings.

Of course it is necessary to Nietzsche's use of recurrence that he can thus avoid the Leibnizian conclusion. The Leibnizian shares with the insulating treatment a rejection of the personal significance that Nietzsche gives recurrence. For the insulating theory the recurrences bring only other experiencing beings; for the Leibnizian they bring nothing additional to a man's present experience—in fact, the recurrences already are in present experience—present experience already is in the recurrences. If a man cannot look forward to his recurrence as being for him an additional experience either because the experience within it will not be his or because it is his now, the recurrence cannot hold the awesome promise or threat that gives it reforming power. The owner of either alternative interpretation would probably be reduced to a feeling of life's transitoriness if he yet accepted the rest of Nietzsche's picture of the universe. So the special power of Nietzsche's idea depends in part on adopting his concept of the personal meaning of recurrence and this in turn depends, as we shall see is true of most of his proof too, on sharing some of his metaphysical preferences.

I suggest that we work somewhat within the Nietzschean interpretation of the significance of the recurrence as we next consider the problems in Nietzsche's attempted proof that this recurrence we have been trying to interpret actually takes place.

First we shall sketch Nietzsche's theory; then we'll take it apart.

The Metaphysics of Nietzsche's Determinism and a Sketch of the Theory of Recurrence

For Nietzsche the world at any moment is an arrangement, a pattern of power quanta, of doings. He holds to a sort of determinism concerning these doings. Yet he attacks something he calls determinism.⁷ He denies, as we saw, the existence of real subjects. There are no empty space and atoms—these are products of language, theories, perception. And the determinism he attacks is that which would have such a subject's behavior determined by imposed laws—that would thus indulge in

⁷ *Ibid.*, secs. 552, 631–34, 639, *et passim*.

the separation of doer and doing which he abhors. Since the world *is* behavior, activity, there are no laws binding behavior to subjects.

I say Nietzsche holds to a sort of determinism, though he attacks something he calls determinism, because he yet retains the central deterministic thesis—that a given situation will ever turn out the same way. For him this is true on account of a given pattern of power quanta having always to be what it is—to behave the way it will because it *is* that behavior. When it comes to human behavior, although Nietzsche does not believe in what he would call determinism—i.e., that a man the same in the same situations would make the same choices because his behavior was bound by unvarying laws—neither does he believe in free will—i.e., that a man the same in the same situations could possibly make different choices simply because his behavior is not thus bound by laws. When a man comes up again in recurrence as part of the same arrangement of power quanta, he makes the same decisions because of what he *is*—he *is* the making of those decisions. Thus did Nietzsche reconcile something of an avoidance of fatalism with the doctrine of recurrence. A man must freshly decide whether to change his life when confronted with recurrence even in a world in which he knows that he has already made his decision precisely as he will make it infinite times. He must freshly decide because his decision has been and will be made each time through the man himself rather than through a set of laws of behavior—returning the same he decides the same.

In Nietzsche's world the number of possible arrangements of the power quanta is finite.⁸ That this is so is derived by him from his notion that there must be a finite number of power quanta—the number being constant also. At least some among those finite possible arrangements are capable of being repeated—there is no cosmic trend of a sort to prevent a following state from being just like a previous one. This Nietzschean universe has existed through infinite time, ever with its constant number of power quanta. From all this Nietzsche concludes that there must have been repetitions of the quanta arrangements. Why? As we said, there are only finite possible arrangements. If one of those that were realized had been a final state, it would have been reached already in this infinite time, and then we would not be witness as we are to continued

⁸ *Ibid.*, secs. 1062–64, 1066–67. It is upon these sections, containing Nietzsche's fullest exposition of his theory of recurrence and its proof, that most of the following discussion is based.

change. So there has been no end state. With only finite possibilities in continuing change through infinite time, we must admit that there must have been repetitions.

But if there had in such a world occurred a repetition, then, since according to Nietzsche's determinism a given situation always turns out the same way, the repeated situation would have to have been followed by the same events that had originally followed it. And these had led to that repetition. And so now the universe has been caught in a ring of recurrence, since again and again the same events must follow that repeated situation and then always lead back to it—and on again. (Strictly speaking, since time in Nietzsche's world extends back infinitely, it is senseless to single out a first repetition. Rather all moments ever were and are repetitions leading back to themselves.)

I believe it important to note that there must be, in such a universe, many events which are in other respects what we would call possible but which will never have been realized simply because they had been locked out of this ring of recurrence, i.e., those events that do not happen to fall within the recurring cycle which has monopolized reality, which can lead only ever again around itself, never outside. I believe this exclusiveness of the ring is crucial to Nietzsche's idea, though he does not seem to have thought much about it, because without it he would be dealing with a world in which there were many variations of one's life along with recurrences (although, as we shall see, this is likely the case within the repetitions of the ring anyway).

We shall now look critically at the theory and its assumptions.

Determinism and Variations on This Life

Just how crucial is Nietzsche's sort of determinism to his idea of recurrence? If we accepted that there were finite possible states of the universe and yet gave up the belief that their order was invariable, then, given no end state, there might still be infinite recurrences through infinite time of all the moments that would have been in Nietzsche's ring. The order of the moments might sometimes vary, but the moments of our lives even in their present sequence would come up again and again like a given series of numbers in infinite tosses of dice.

But now Nietzsche would be thrust forcefully against the

strange problem I mentioned at the end of my sketch of his theory. Among the events that could come up in such a universe would be many which had now not been locked out from realization by the shortness of the ring's circuit. Among these events would be many variations of a man's life along with the many recurrences. Now, an amazing consequence that I would draw from either the Nietzschean or what I have called the Leibnizian interpretation of the recurrence is this: a man is the same in recurrence and therefore a man is the same in variation. In other words, a man's actual experience in this universe extends again and again beyond his life on earth as he comes up again and again in this universe experiencing new and different moments.

This concept, which I find fascinating in itself, wrecks Nietzsche's use of recurrence in his revaluation project once variations as well as repetitions of each man's life are allowed to be woven into the fabric of the universe. For it was crucial to Nietzsche's use of recurrence that *this* life with its achievements and its choices be echoed forever as the exclusive hard reality of each man. But by rejecting the exclusiveness of a ring of recurrence, we have let in something like the lazy but terrifying Hindu-Buddhist concept of many different lives lived, many different weary courses of struggle for achievement entered upon, many different sets of life's decisions made. Instead of giving this life and its every moment the darkest underlining we have overwhelmed it, blurred it in the worst way. This, then, is a consequence of allowing chance into the Nietzschean universe.

But, I am afraid, even the exclusiveness of the Nietzschean ring is probably not enough to save his concept from the fate I have indicated. For even if we accept his deterministic circle as the sole reality, I would expect many variations of a life to pop up in such a world before it gets around to repetitions anyway. Suppose we think in terms of Nietzsche's own belief in cycles of destructions and re-creations of the world. It seems unlikely to me that the re-creation of the world after the next destruction would result in a precise repetition of the world as it is now, even if there are only finite possible arrangements of forces in the universe. It seems to me that there would probably be vast numbers of destructions and re-creations before a repetition was struck. But by then, we might expect any number of variations of a life to have been locked into the ring along with the repetition. After all, the odds against any version of the world being precisely like this one are im-

mensely higher than those against its simply containing one of countless possible variations of a life.

*The Finite Universe or Limiting Our Concern
to Finite Volumes of an Infinite Universe*

For Nietzsche it is important to his proof that the universe be a finite arrangement of finite quanta of force (in order, so he thinks, to limit the number of possible states of the universe). This he thinks he establishes through his metaphysics; he claims that infinite force is inconceivable. He does not really give us his reasoning, but probably he is rejecting the concept of actual infinity.⁹

We shall soon see how hard it is to restrict to a finite number the arrangements of even a finite number of things in a finite universe. In an infinite universe of infinite things conceived of as everywhere active, even if it be so through infinite time, obviously there might be no recurrence of a total state, since the number of possible states would be infinite. Yet a precise repetition of a state of such a universe is conceivable; and if that universe were deterministic, it would thereupon fall into recurrence. But that this had happened would not only be overwhelmingly unlikely but also impossible of demonstration by Nietzsche. (And anyway, Nietzsche would be right to feel frustrated even if he found such a demonstration, since he should then, in an infinite but recurring universe, still expect many more variations than repetitions of a man's life going round that giant ring.)

Suppose, however, we restrict our attention to smaller matters than the state of the whole universe. Why should it be necessary that the total universe recur as it was in a moment in order that a man re-experience what had been *for him* that moment? This moment you are now experiencing, this life, insofar as you are aware of it, could come about again and again in some finite volume of an infinite universe and also here and there across an infinite universe—each time and place within a different cosmic context. (Of course, what we say here applies to variations as well as repetitions of moments and lives.) We shall soon develop further this notion that moments and lives might be reidentified without regard to the total state of the universe.

⁹ Milič Čapek in his article on "Eternal Return" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* suggests that Nietzsche adopted Dühring's rejection of actual infinity.

The Constant Quantity of Force

Force, doing, can never be rest or nothing. It must ever be what it is—just so much force and doing. Nietzsche writes as though what he has discovered in such reasoning is the first law of thermodynamics, the principle of the conservation of energy. His way of arriving at his result, his whole conceptual framework, however, makes a coincidence of any agreement here with the scientists. Part of the importance to Nietzsche of this element of his proof is that it seems in this way some sort of link with science.¹⁰ Beyond that it is the basis for holding that the universe in unceasing activity lasts forever.

*Finite Possibility—in the Universe of Science,
in the World of Phenomena, and in the
Universe of Nietzschean Metaphysics*

Another important presupposition of the proof for recurrence is that in a finite universe of finite power quanta it must follow that there shall be only a finite number of possible arrangements of forces. Walter Kaufmann, in his article on Nietzsche in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, has summarized Georg Simmel's demonstration in his book *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche* that Nietzsche is wrong in this presupposition. "Imagine three wheels of equal size, rotating on a single axis, one point marked on the circumference of each and the three points lined up in one straight line. If the second wheel rotated twice as fast as the first and if the speed of the third was $1/\pi$ of the speed of the first, the initial line-up could never recur." (As pointed out by Čapek in his article on eternal return, Dühring and others made what is essentially the same objection to finite possibility—on the ground of "the continuity of space.")

I would question the applicability of this reasoning, however, to the Nietzschean universe not of things arranged in an objective empty space but of finite centers of force. Again I think we must realize how very dependent the recurrence was on the Nietzschean metaphysics. But let us postpone this point until we have first considered the consequences to recurrence of not admitting finite possibility.

If we accepted infinite possibility in finite space we would be back to the tremendous improbability of a repetition of

¹⁰ Nietzsche, *op. cit.*, sec. 1063.

the total state of the universe that we had begun to deal with in our discussion of the infinite universe. But now we would even have to admit the overwhelming improbability of repetition in a finite volume of that infinite universe. We said we would return to our project of easing the condition for recognizing a repetition of a moment to less than its being part of a repetition of the total state of the universe. Yet, as I just said, even if we talk in terms of the repetition of only a small volume of the universe as the context of a repeating moment, we are faced now with a staggering improbability of repetition. But we can limit our area of concern still further to the phenomenal character of the experience regardless of context. How many different phenomenal possibilities are there in Simmel's line-up of wheels? I would say there can be only finite phenomenally discernible line-ups. One could take physiology to imply that there are possible only finite different experiences on account of the fact that there are possible only finite different neural hookups and firings.

Let us accept the thesis of finite phenomenal possibility. What if we next decide that the universe is like that of Simmel's demonstration—finite but entertaining infinite possibilities below the level of phenomenal discernibility? We would expect the sub-phenomenal states, which would be the effective reality of such a world, to determine ultimately—entirely—the order of phenomenal events. The sub-phenomenal order, then, as the effective reality, would be the only order in which repetition could result in the ring. But such repetition is overwhelmingly unlikely. Phenomenal repetition, which would be overwhelmingly likely, would represent indifferently any one of the infinite varying sub-phenomenal states which could be responsible for it below the level of phenomenal discernibility. But, again, such phenomenal repetition would not entail that there had been a sub-phenomenal—and effective—repetition and so would not signify a ring of recurrence. And such a ring—requiring a sub-phenomenal repetition—would be as overwhelmingly unlikely as the repetition itself. There would be no exclusive ring and, of course, the phenomenal variations on this life, drowning out the phenomenal repetitions of it, must spoil such a universe for Nietzsche, as they have spoiled every other.

But, coming back to a discussion of the role of the Nietzschean metaphysics in his own assumption of finite possibility,

let us notice that the nature of the power quanta of Nietzsche's finite universe is rather like that of the phenomenal moments we have just numbered as finite. There is no objective thing-in-itself, no real empty space in his conception.¹¹ There is nothing beyond the power quanta, the will to power. Reality for him is solely in the struggle of these finite power centers, which fill all space, which *are* all space. Each mirrors, represents, the state of all the others, since the existence of each is nothing beyond an interaction with the others—an acting on them and a being acted upon by them. Like Leibniz's monads, the power quanta of Nietzsche are thus each like a moment of experience, a phenomenal moment. They are the measure of all reality; and the imperceivable, objective space of Simmel's demonstration is for Nietzsche surely a fiction. Granting Nietzsche his finite possibilities in such a universe, however, still cannot save him from the disastrous consequences we have examined of the variations of a man's life being among those possibilities.

Repeatability of Events

That same second law of thermodynamics which haunts would-be inventors of perpetual motion machines seemed to Nietzsche his enemy at this point in his proof of a perpetual motion universe.

The universe, according to Lord Kelvin's application of the law, is running down, inevitably losing to the random vibrations of heat all the better-ordered energy (e.g., that involved in the movement of persons) that makes the world interesting. Thus this law could seem to preclude any repetition of a state of the universe. All succeeding states must, following time's arrow, contain more and more entropy, more and more disordered motion.

Nietzsche, of course, required repetition for recurrence. He met this challenge by rejecting all mechanistic theory. He felt he had justified such a move already in an ill-advised rejection of atomic and molecular theory, even as mere description of physical events on the macroscopic level, on what were really metaphysical grounds for rejecting an idea of metaphysically "effective" atoms.¹² But he came up with another argument that he writes of as though it has devastated

¹¹ *Ibid.*, secs. 515, 520, 636–37, *et passim*.

¹² *Ibid.*, sec. 552.

all thermodynamics.¹³ In reality it is merely a direct response to Lord Kelvin's prediction of the universe running down.

Nietzsche's argument is simply that the universe has had an infinite past and, if an end state were to have been reached through some finite relentless process, it would have been reached by now—as it obviously has not been. The assertion of an infinite past comes again from Nietzsche's metaphysical vision, of a world in which power quanta not only always must be but always must have been that which they are—just so much struggling force.

Current Cosmology, Verification, and My Conclusion

Current cosmological theories grow from precise observations and complex calculations, of course, rather than Nietzschean metaphysics. In general, although these theories are mechanistic, Lord Kelvin's prediction does not score heavily in them because the universes they describe either avoid any end state through some properly mechanistic process of renewal or come sooner to some other sort of end than that predicted by Lord Kelvin. Their universes are also both in some cases infinite and in all open to Simmel's argument; they are on either count capable of infinite configuration.

The current theories and Nietzsche's recurrence thesis as well are not based on direct observation of those grand events they describe, of course, but on estimations of the present character of the universe and likely extrapolations from these (although Nietzsche's also has the doubtful advantage of his metaphysical intuitions about power). It seems to me that Nietzsche's theory of recurrence, particularly if it is reformulated so far as possible for expression within the framework of science, rather than Nietzschean metaphysics, is quite as open to indirect verification and is quite as empirically meaningful as the current theories. If, as was the case earlier in the century, the best scientific observation and theory indicated that the universe was finite, if geometry allowed for only finite arrangements of finite things in finite space, if experiment and reason supported a strict determinism, and if science postulated an infinite time for the universe's present sort of activity to have continued with an avoidance of Lord Kelvin's prediction, then Nietzsche's theory would have been virtually confirmed. In fact, since this list of conditions represents a vision largely rejected by science, I think Nietz-

¹³ *Ibid.*, sec. 1066.

sche's theory may be considered disconfirmed. But this shows how the theory is open to verification. It is meaningful, but it is wrong.

There is a sort of direct observation that each of us will make concerning the most significant aspect of Nietzsche's doctrine. If his theory is true, then like dumb beasts getting whack after whack but forgetting each as the sting dies, we in fact will be feeling a life's whack each of infinite times.

My own conclusion is that we must turn to science rather than Nietzsche's intuitions in this incredibly important question. Having done so, I believe it probable that countless repetitions and variations of my phenomenal moments do occur in the universe; and whether these happen either at scattered times or in scattered places, i.e., either in infinite time or infinite space, or both, does not matter. Through the variations alone my life is continued and extended. This unimaginable expansion of my life swamps the significance of any repetitions that happen to come up of the life I live here and now. And so Nietzsche has lost.

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NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

THOMAS MANN

(April 29, 1947)

Ladies and gentlemen:

When at the beginning of the year 1889 the news of Nietzsche's mental breakdown began to spread from Turin and Basle, many of those who, distributed throughout Europe, already possessed a measure of understanding for the fateful greatness of this man, may have repeated to themselves Ophelia's lamentation:

"O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!"

And of the characterizations contained in the following verses, mourning the terrible misfortune that so highminded an intellect, "blasted by ecstasy", should now disharmonize like bells out of tune, many fit Nietzsche exactly,—prominent among them the words in which the grieving heroine epitomizes her praise: "The observ'd of all observers." We would use the word "fascinating" instead, and indeed, in all the world literature and the history of the human mind, we seek in vain for a personality more fascinating than that of the hermit of Sils Maria. Yet it is a fascination closely related to the one emanating through the centuries from that great character created by Shakespeare, the melancholy prince of Denmark.

Nietzsche, the thinker and writer, "the mould of form" as Ophelia would call him, was a personality of phenomenal cultural plenitude and complexity, summing up all that is essentially European, a personality that had absorbed a lot from the past which in more or less conscious imitation and succession it reminded, repeated, in a mythical manner projected forth into the presence; and I have no doubt that the great lover of masquerade was well aware of the trait so like Hamlet in the tragic play of life he presented—I am tempted to say: he enacted. As far as I, the reader and "observer" of the next following generation immersing with deep emotion,

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am concerned, I sensed this relationship early and at the same time I experienced those confused sensations which especially for the young heart carry something so novel, so exciting and so engrossing: the mixture of veneration and pity. I have never ceased to experience it. It is the tragic pity for an overloaded, overcharged soul which was only called to knowledge, not really born to it and, like Hamlet, was destroyed by it; for a dainty, fine, good soul for which love was a necessity, which inclined toward noble friendship and was never meant for loneliness, and which yet was condemned to just this: the most profound, the most frigid loneliness, the aloneness of the criminal; for a spirituality at first deeply pious, entirely prone to reverence, bound to religious tradition, which was dragged by fate practically by the hair into a wild and intoxicated prophesy of barbaric resplendent force, of stifled conscience, of evil, a state devoid of all piety and raging against its very own nature.

. . .

But the completely unified and compact character of Nietzsche's life work cannot be sufficiently stressed. Following Schopenhauer whose disciple he remained even after he had long denied the master, throughout his life he really only varied, extended, impressed upon his readers one single omnipresent thought which, initially appearing with all soundness and undeniably justified in its contemporary criticism, in course of time falls prey to a maenadic debasement to the point where Nietzsche's story can actually be called the story of the degeneration of this thought.

What is this thought?—In order to understand it, we must take it apart down to its ingredients, to the component parts clashing within it. Listed in casual disorder, they are: Life, civilization ("Kultur"), consciousness or cognizance, art, nobleness, morals, instinct. The concept of *civilization* predominates in this complex of ideas. It is positioned almost equal to life itself: civilization, that is the nobleness of life, and combined with it as its sources and premises are art and instinct, whilst as mortal enemies and destroyers of civilization or "Kultur" and life there figure consciousness and cognizance, science and finally morals—that same morality which as preserver of truth assassinates life, because life essentially bases on semblance, art, deception, perspective, illusion and because error is the father of all that lives.

From Schopenhauer he inherited the sentence that "life as a pure concept, viewed as such or reproduced by art, is a

significant drama," i.e., the sentence that life may be justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon. Life is art and semblance no more, and therefore higher than the truth (which is a matter of morals) stands wisdom (as an affair of "Kultur" and of life)—a tragic, ironical kind of wisdom, limiting science on the basis of artistic instinct, for the sake of civilization, and defending the ultimate value, life, on two sides: against the pessimism of those who slander life and propagate the hereafter or the Nirvana—and against the optimism of those who travel in rationalism and world betterment, who prattle about the earthly happiness of all, about justice, and prepare the socialist insurrection of slaves. This tragic wisdom, blessing life in all its untruthfulness, hardness and cruelty, Nietzsche baptized with the name of Dionysos.

The name of the intoxicated god first appears in his early, aesthetic mystical paper on the "Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music," in which the Dionysian element as an artistic state of the soul is opposed to the artistic principle of Apolline distance and objectivity, very similar to the way in which Schiller in his famous essay juxtaposes the "Naive" to the "Sentimental." Here for the first time is coined the expression "theoretical man," and the inimical position against Socrates, the archetype of this theoretical man, is taken up: against Socrates, the despiser of instinct, the glorifier of conscience, who taught that only what is conscious can be good, the enemy of Dionysos and the murderer of tragedy. According to Nietzsche, he originated a civilization of Alexandrine scientificity, pale, scholarly, alien to mythos, alien to life, a civilization in which optimism and faith in the rational reign supreme, the practical and theoretical utilitarianism which, like democracy itself, is a symptom of declining power and physiological fatigue. The human being of this Socratic, anti-tragical civilization, the theoretical man, no longer desires to have anything *entirely*, with all the natural cruelty of the world, debilitated as he is by looking at things optimistically. But, so young Nietzsche insists on convincing himself, the time of the Socratic human being is over. A new generation, heroic, temerarious, contemptuous of all weakly doctrines enters upon the stage, the Dionysian spirit is perceived as slowly awakening in our present world, the world of 1870; out of the Dionysian profundities of the German spirit, of German music, of German philosophy, the tragical drama is reborn.

Later he poked a desperate kind of fun at his onetime

faith in the German spirit—and at everything he read into it, i.e., himself. Indeed, his entire self is already contained in this prelude to his philosophy, as yet mildly humanitarian, as yet extravagantly and romantically intoned; and the world perspective as well, the embracing gaze upon the entire occidental civilization is already there, even though for the time being he is primarily concerned with the German civilization in whose high destiny he believes, but which he sees in gravest danger of forfeiting this destiny because of Bismarck's establishing his power state, because of politics, democratic leveling down to mediocrity and smug satiation with victory. His splendid diatribe against the senile and merry book of the theologian David Strauss, "The Old and the New Faith," is the most direct example of this criticism against a Philistinism of saturation, threatening to deprive the German spirit of all depth. And there is something deeply moving in the way the young thinker already here throws prophetic glances ahead to his own fate that seems to lie before him like an open book of tragedy. I am referring to the passage where he taunts the ethical cowardice of the vulgar illuminator Strauss who, he says, takes good care not to derive any *moral percepts for life* from his Darwinism, from the bellum omnium contra omnes and from the prerogative of the mightier, but rather only disports himself in strong sallies against preachers and miracles, for which one can always obtain the Philistine's partisanship. He himself, that he already knows deep down within him, will do the ultimate and not even shy from insanity in order to obtain the Philistine's *opposition*.

It is the second one of the "Thoughts Out of Season," entitled "On the Usefulness and the Disadvantage of Historiology for Life," in which that fundamental thought of his life which I mentioned above is pre-formed most perfectly, even though still draped in a special critical guise. This admirable treatise fundamentally is nothing but one great variation of the Hamlet passage on the "native hue of resolution," that "is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." The title is incorrect in as far as there is hardly any mention of the usefulness of historiography—all the more however of its disadvantages for life, the dear, holy aesthetically justified life. The 19th century has been called the historical era, and indeed this century was the first to create and develop that sense of history of which former civilizations, just *because* they were civilizations, artistically unified systems of life, knew little or

nothing. Nietzsche goes so far as to speak of a "historical disease," laming life and its spontaneity. Education, that to-day meant historical education. But the Greeks had known no historical education of any kind, and one would probably hesitate to call the Greeks uneducated. Historiology for the sake of pure apperception, not conducted for the purpose of advancing life and without the counterbalance of "plastic giftedness," creative uninhibitedness, is murderous, is death. A historical phenomenon in a state of apperception—is dead. A scientifically cognized religion, e.g., is doomed, it is at an end. The historically critical treatment of Christianity, Nietzsche says with conservative apprehension, dissolves it into pure knowledge of things christian. In examining religion from the point of view of history, he says, "there come to light things which necessarily destroy the reverential mood of illusion in which alone everything desirous of living can remain alive." Only in love, adumbrated by the illusion of love, does man *create*. Historiology would have to be treated as a work of art in order to creatively contribute to civilization—but that would be contrary to the analytical and inartistic trend of the time. Historiology exorcises our instincts. Educated, or miseducated, by it, man no longer is able to "drop the rains" and to act naively, confiding in the "divine animal." Historiology always underestimates what is growing into the future and paralyzes action which must ever injure respectful reverences. What it teaches and creates, is *justice*. But life is not in need of justice, it is in need of injustice, it is essentially unjust. "A great deal of strength is required," Nietzsche says (and it is doubtful whether he credits himself with this strength) "to be able to live and forget to what extent living and being unjust are one." Yet everything depends on the ability to forget. He wants the unhistorical: the art and strength of being able to *forget* and to confine himself within a limited horizon—a demand more easily made than fulfilled, we might add. For we are born within a limited horizon; to confine ourselves within it artificially is an aesthetic masquerade and a denial of fate from which something genuine and worth while can hardly derive. But, very beautifully and nobly, Nietzsche wants to go *beyond* the mere historical, to divert the gaze away from the things that are in the process of growing, toward those which give our existence its eternal and sentient character, toward art and religion. The enemy is science, for it sees and knows only historiography and the process of growing, nothing sentient,

eternal; it despises forgetfulness as the death of knowledge and seeks to raise all limitations of our horizon. But everything that lives requires a protective atmosphere, a mysterious nebulous impassable ring and an enveloping illusion. A life dominated by science is much less of a life than one dominated not by knowledge, but rather by instincts and by *powerful phantasmata*.

In reading of "powerful phantasmata" today we think of Sorel and his book "Sur la Violence," in which syndicalism and fascism are still one and which declares the mythos of the mass to be the indispensable motor of history, entirely independent of truth or untruth. We also ask ourselves, whether it would not be better to keep the masses in respect of reason and truth and at the same time to honor their demand for justice—than to implant the mythos of the mass and to let mobs dominated by "powerful phantasmata" loose on humanity. Who is doing that today and for what purpose? Certainly not for that of promoting civilization.—But Nietzsche knows nothing of masses and wants to know nothing of them. "Let them go to the devil," he says, "and the statistics too!" He wants and proclaims an era in which people wisely refrain, against and beyond the historical way of thinking, from any constructional interpretation of the process of life or of human history as well, in which they do not regard the masses at all any more, but rather the great individuals, whose greatness makes them contemporaries regardless of time and who discourse in the spirit high above the bustling historical throng of nonentities. The goal of humanity, he says, lies not at its end, but in its highest representatives. That is his individualism: an aesthetic genius cult and hero worship which he has taken from Schopenhauer, together with the insistence that happiness is impossible and a *heroic* life is the only thing worthy and possible for the individual. Transformed by Nietzsche and together with his adoration of the powerful and beautiful life, this results in a heroical aestheticism, as whose protective deity he proclaims the god of tragedy, Dionysos. It is just this Dionysian aestheticism which makes of the later Nietzsche the greatest critic and psychologist of morals known to the history of the human mind.

He is a born psychologist, psychology is his archpassion: apperception and psychology, these are fundamentally one and the same passion, and it characterizes the entire inner contradictiousness of this great and suffering spirit that he, who values life far above apperception, is so completely and

hopelessly caught in psychology. He is already a psychologist only on the basis of Schopenhauer's findings that not the intellect produces will, but vice versa, that not the intellect is the primary and dominating element, but the will, to which the intellect entertains a relationship of no more than servitude. The intellect as a servile tool of will: that is the font of all psychology, a psychology of casting suspicions and tearing off masks, and Nietzsche as attorney general of life, throws himself into the arms of moral psychology, he suspects all "good" urges of originating from bad ones and proclaims the "evil" ones as those which ennoble and exalt life. That is "The Revaluation of All Values."

What used to be called Socratism, "the theoretical man," conscious sentiency, historical disease, now is called simply "morals," particularly "christian morals" which is revealed as something out and out poisonous, rancorous and inimical to life—and now we must not forget that Nietzsche's criticism of morals is in part something impersonal, something belonging quite generally to his time. It is the time about the turn of the century, the time of the first running attack of the European intellectuals against the hypocritical morals of the Victorian, the bourgeois era. Into this picture Nietzsche's furious battle against morals fits to a certain degree and often with astounding family resemblance. It is astonishing to note the close relationship between some of Nietzsche's aperçus and the attacks, by no means nothing but vain, with which approximately at the same time Oscar Wilde, the English aesthetic, shocked his public and made it laugh. When Wilde declares: "For, try as we may, we cannot get behind the appearance of things to reality. And the terrible reason may be that there is no reality in things apart from their appearances;" when he speaks of the "truth of masks" and of the "decay of lies," when he exclaims: "To me beauty is the wonder of wonders. It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible;" when he calls "truth something so personal that never two spirits can do justice to the same truth," when he says: "Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind, and poisons us. . . . The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it;" and: "Don't be led astray into the paths of virtue!"—then all this might very well stand in Nietzsche's writings. And when on the other hand one reads of the latter: "Seriousness, this unmistakable sign of the more laborious metabolism."—"In art the lie sanctifies

itself and the will to deceive has the clear conscience on its side."—"We are basically inclined to maintain that the most incorrect judgements are the most indispensable."—"It is no more than a moral prejudice that the truth is worth more than the semblance."—Then there is not one among these sentences which could not appear in one of Oscar's comedies and get a laugh in St. James's Theater. When somebody wanted to praise Wilde very highly, they compared his plays to Sheridan's "The School for Scandal". Much of Nietzsche seems to originate with this school.

Of course the juxtaposition of Nietzsche with Wilde has something almost sacrilegious, for the latter was a dandy; the German philosopher however was something like a saint of immoralism. And yet, with the more or less deliberate martyrdom of his life's end, the penal institution of Reading, Wilde's dandyism assumes a touch of holiness which would have aroused Nietzsche's entire sympathy. What reconciled him with Socrates was the cup of hemlock, the end, the sacrificial death, and he believes that the impression of this on Greek youth and on Plato cannot be overestimated. And he left the personality of Jesus of Nazareth untouched by his hatred of historical Christianity, again for the sake of the end, of the cross which he loved with all his heart and toward which he himself was striding deliberately.

His life was intoxication and suffering—a highly artistic state, mythologically speaking the union of Dionysos with the Crucified. Swinging the thyrsus he ecstatically glorified the strong and beautiful, the amorally triumphant life and defended it against any stunting by intellectualism—and at the same time he paid tribute to suffering as none other. "It determines the *order of rank*," he says, "how deeply a man can suffer." Those are not the words of an anti-moralist. Nor is there a trace of anti-moralism in it when he writes: "As far as torture and renunciation are concerned, the life of my last years can measure up to that of any ascetic at any time." For he does not write this in search of compassion, but rather with pride: "I *want*," he says, "to have it as hard as any man can possibly have it." He made things hard for himself, hard up to sanctity, for Schopenhauer's saint ultimately always remained the highest type for him, and the "heroic life," that is the life of the saint. What defines the saint? That he does not one of all the things he would like to do, and all the things he does not like to do. That is the way in which Nietzsche lived: "Renouncing everything I revered, renouncing

reverence itself . . . Thou must become master over thyself, master also over thine own virtues." That is the act of "vaulting above the self" Novalis mentions somewhere and which, he thinks, is everywhere the supreme one. Now this "act" (an expression of showmen and acrobats) in Nietzsche's pen has not a whit of anything exuberantly able and saltatorial. Everything "choreographic" in his attitude is velleity and disagreeable in the extreme. It is much rather a bloody kind of self-mutilation, self-torment, moralism. His very concept of truth is ascetic: for to him truth is what hurts, and he would be suspicious of any truth that would cause him a pleasant sensation. "Among the forces," he says, "raised by our morals was truthfulness: the latter finally turns on morals, discovers its teleology, its *prejudiced* manner of observation." His "Immoralism" thus is the self-cancellation of morality for the sake of truthfulness. But that this in a way is exaggeration and luxuriation of morals he hints at by speaking of an inherited treasure of morality which could well afford to waste and throw out of the window a great deal without thereby becoming noticeably impoverished.

All this stands behind the atrocities and intoxicated messages of power, force, cruelty and political deception into which his thought of life as a work of art and of an unreflected civilization dominated by instinct, degenerates splendidly in his later writings. When at one time a Swiss critic, of the daily paper "Bund" in Bern, wrote that Nietzsche was entering a plea for the abolition of all decent sentiments, the philosopher was completely flabbergasted by being so utterly misunderstood. "Much obliged!" he said scornfully. For everything he had said he had intended to be very noble and humane, in the sense of a higher, more profound, prouder, *more beautiful* humanity, and he "had not really meant any harm" as it were, at any rate nothing evil, although a lot of wickedness. For everything that has depth, is wicked; life itself is profoundly wicked, it has not been thought up by morality, it knows nothing of "truth," but bases on semblance and artistic lie, it mocks virtue, for its essence is ruthlessness and exploitation,—and, Nietzsche says, there is a pessimism of power, an intellectual predilection for what is hard, horrible, wicked, problematical in our existence arising from well-being, from a fullness of existence. This "well-being", this "fullness of existence" the diseased Euphorian ascribes to himself and takes it upon himself to proclaim the sides of life so far negated, especially negated by Christianity, as those

most worthy of affirmation. Life above all! Why? That he never said. He never gave the reason why life should be something worthy of being adored unconditionally and preserved above all else, but only declared that life stood higher than apperception, *for* with life apperception destroyed itself. Apperception presupposed life for its existence and therefore had in it the interest of self-preservation. It thus seems that there must be life, in order that there may be something to apperceive. But it does seem to us as though this train of logic did not suffice to motivate his enthusiastic guardianship of life. If he would see in it the creation of a god, then we should have to respect his piety, even though personally we might find little cause to fall flat on our faces before the exploded cosmos of modern physics. But instead he sees in it a massive and senseless spawn of the will to power, and it is just its senselessness and its colossal immorality which is to give us cause for ecstatic admiration. His devotee's exclamation is not "Hosianal!" but "Evoe!" and this cry sounds extremely broken and tortured. It is supposed to deny that there is something more than biological in man which does not completely expend itself in its interest in life, the possibility of backing away from this interest, a critical detachment which perhaps is what Nietzsche calls "morals" and which indeed will never seriously harm that lovable life—for that it is much too irredeemable—but which nevertheless might serve as a feeble corrective and acuation of conscience, a function only Christianity has always exercised. "There is no fixed basis outside of life," Nietzsche says, "from where one might reflect on existence, no superior authority before which life could be *ashamed*." Really not? We have the feeling that such an authority does exist, and let it not be morality, then it is simply the human spirit in an absolute sense of the word, humaneness proper as critical ability, irony and liberty, combined with the word of judgement. "There is no superior judge above life"? But somehow nature and life go beyond themselves in man, in him they lose their innocence, they take on *spirit*—and spirit is the self-criticism of life. This humane Something within us has a doubtful look of compassion for a "healthful doctrine" of life that in sober days still goes against the historical disease, but later degenerates into a maenadic rage against truth, morals, religion, human kindness, against everything that might serve to tolerably domesticate that ferocious life.

As far as I can see, there are two mistakes which warp

Nietzsche's thinking and lead to his downfall. The first one is a complete, we must assume: a deliberate, misperception of the power relationship between instinct and intellect on earth, just as though the latter were the dangerously dominating element, and highest time it were to save instinct from its threat. If one considers how completely will, urge and interest dominate and hold down intellect, reason and the sense of justice in the great majority of people, the opinion becomes absurd that intellect must be overcome by instinct. This opinion can be explained only historically, on the strength of a momentary philosophical situation, as a correction of rationalistic satiety, and immediately it requires counter-correction. As though it were necessary to defend life against the spirit! As though there were the slightest danger that conditions on earth could ever become too spiritualized. The simplest generosity should constrain us to shield and protect the weak little flame of reason, of spirit, of justice, instead of taking the part of power and instinct-governed life and parading a corybantic overestimation of its "negated" side, of crime,—the moronic effect of which we living today have just experienced. Nietzsche acts—and in so doing he has caused a great deal of trouble—as though it were our moral consciousness which, like Mephistopheles, raises an icy, satanic fist against life. As far as I am concerned, I see nothing particularly satanic in the thought (a thought long known to mystics) that one day life might be eliminated by the power of the human spirit, an achievement which is still a long, an interminably long way off. The danger of life eliminating itself on this planet by perfecting the atom bomb is considerably more urgent. But that too is improbable. Life is a cat with nine lives, and so is humanity.

The second one of Nietzsche's errors is the utterly false relationship he establishes between life and morals when he treats of them as opposites. The truth is that they belong together. Ethics support life, and a man with good morals is an upright citizen of life,—perhaps a little boring, but extremely useful. The real opposites are ethics and *aesthetics*. Not morality, but beauty is linked to death, as many poets have said and sung,—and Nietzsche should not know it? "When Socrates and Plato started talking about truth and justice," he says somewhere, "they were not Greeks any longer, but Jews—or I don't know what." Well, thanks to their morality the Jews have proven themselves to be good and persevering children of life. They, together with their religion, their

faith in a just God, have survived thousands of years, whereas the dissolute little nation of aesthetes and artists, the Greeks, very quickly disappeared from the stage of history.

But Nietzsche, far from any racial anti-semitism, does indeed see in Jewry the cradle of Christianity and in the latter, justly but with revulsion, the germ of democracy, the French Revolution and the hateful "modern ideas" which his shattering word brands as herd animal morals. "Shopkeepers, Christians, cows, women, Englishmen and other democrats" he says, for he sees the origin of the "modern ideas" in England (the French, he claims, were only their soldiers), and what he despises and curses in these ideas is their utilitarianism and their eudaemonism, the fact that they raise peace and happiness on earth as the highest objects of desire—whereas it is just such vile and weakly values the noble, the tragic, the heroic man kicks under his feet. The latter is necessarily a warrior, hard against himself and others, ready to sacrifice himself and others. The primary reproach he throws at Christianity is the fact that it raised the individual to such importance that one could no longer *sacrifice* it. But, he says, the breed persists only through human sacrifice and Christianity is the opposing principle against natural selection. It has actually dragged down and debilitated the power, the responsibility, the high duty to sacrifice human beings and for thousands of years, until the arrival of Nietzsche, has prevented the development of that energy of greatness which "by breeding, and on the other hand by destroying millions of misfits, forms future man and does not perish from the never before existing misery he creates." Who was it that recently had the strength to take upon himself this responsibility, impudently thought himself capable of this greatness and unfalteringly fulfilled this high duty of sacrificing hecatombs of human beings? A crapule of megalomaniacal petty bourgeois, at the sight of whom Nietzsche would immediately have gone down with an extreme case of megrim and all its accompanying symptoms. It is necessary first of all to change the spiritual climate, to create a new feeling for the difficulties and the nobleness of human sentiency, an all pervading, fundamental philosophy from which no one exempts himself, which everyone deep within himself acknowledges as his supreme judge. Toward its creation and stabilization the poet and artist, working imperceptibly downward into breadth from on top, can contribute to some extent. But these things are not taught and made, they are experienced in suffering.

That philosophy is no cold abstraction, but experience, suf-

fering and sacrificial deed for humanity, was Nietzsche's knowledge and example. In the course of it, he was driven upward into the icy wastes of grotesque error, but the future was in truth the land of his love, and for posterity, as for us, whose youth is incalculably indebted to him, he will stand, a figure full of delicate and venerable tragedy and enveloped by the flashing summer lightning that heralds the dawn of a new time.

NIETZSCHE IN ENGLISH

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

"Nietzsche contra Wagner, &c." Vol. I. of the collected works of Friedrich Nietzsche. Translated by Thomas Common. London: Henry & Co. 1896.

It is with a most opportune consideration for my Easter holiday that Messrs. Henry & Co. have just issued the first volume of their translation of the works of Friedrich Nietzsche. And such a volume, too! containing everything that he wrote just before he reached the point at which Germany made up its mind that he was mad, and shut him up, both figuratively and actually. Whilst I am still at large I may as well explain that Nietzsche is a philosopher—that is to say, something unintelligible to an Englishman. To make my readers realize what a philosopher is, I can only say that *I* am a philosopher. If you ask incredulously, "How, then, are your articles so interesting?" I reply that there is nothing so interesting as philosophy, provided its materials are not spurious. For instance, take my own materials—humanity and the fine arts. Any studious, timorously ambitious bookworm can run away from the world with a few shelvesful of history, essays, descriptions, and criticisms, and, having pieced an illusory humanity and art out of the effects produced by his library on his imagination, build some silly systematization of his worthless ideas over the abyss of his own nescience. Such a philosopher is as dull and dry as you please: it is he who brings his profession into disrepute, especially when he talks much about art, and so persuades people to read him. Without having looked at more than fifty pictures in his life, or made up his mind on the smallest point about one of the fifty, he will audaciously take it upon himself to explain the development of painting from Zeuxis and Apelles to Raphael and Michael Angelo. As to the way he will go on about music, of which he always has an awe-stricken conceit, it spoils my temper to think of it, especially when one remembers that musical composition is taught (a monstrous pretension) in this country by people who *read* scores, and never by any chance listen to performances. Now, the

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right way to go to work—strange as it may appear—is to look at pictures until you have acquired the power of seeing them. If you look at several thousand good pictures every year, and form some sort of practical judgment about every one of them—were it only that it is not worth troubling over—then at the end of five years or so you will, if you have a wise eye, be able to see what is actually in a picture, and not what you think is in it. Similarly, if you listen critically to music every day for a number of years, you will, if you have a wise ear, acquire the power of hearing music. And so on with all the arts. When we come to humanity it is still the same: only by intercourse with men and women can we learn anything about it. This involves an active life, not a contemplative one; for unless you do something in the world, you can have no real business to transact with men; and unless you love and are loved, you can have no intimate relations with them. And you must transact business, wirepull politics, discuss religion, give and receive hate, love and friendship with all sorts of people before you can acquire the sense of humanity. If you are to acquire the sense sufficiently to be a philosopher, you must do all these things unconditionally. You must not say that you will be a gentleman and limit your intercourse to this class or that class; or that you will be a virtuous person and generalize about the affections from a single instance—unless, indeed, you have the rare happiness to stumble at first upon an all-enlightening instance. You must have no convictions, because, as Nietzsche puts it, “convictions are prisons.” Thus, I blush to add, you cannot be a philosopher and a good man, though you may be a philosopher and a great one. You will say, perhaps, that if this be so, there should be no philosophers; and perhaps you are right; but though I make you this handsome concession, I do not defer to you to the extent of ceasing to exist. After all, if you insist on the hangman, whose pursuits are far from elevating, you may very well tolerate the philosopher, even if philosophy involves philandering; or, to put it another way, if, in spite of your hangman, you tolerate murder within the sphere of war, it may be necessary to tolerate comparatively venial irregularities within the sphere of philosophy. It is the price of progress; and, after all, it is the philosopher, and not you, who will burn for it.

These are shocking sentiments, I know; but I assure you you will think them mere Sunday School commonplaces when you have read a little of Nietzsche. Nietzsche is worse than shocking, he is simply awful: his epigrams are written with

phosphorus on brimstone. The only excuse for reading them is that before long you must be prepared either to talk about Nietzsche or else retire from society, especially from aristocratically minded society (not the same thing, by the way, as aristocratic society), since Nietzsche is the champion of privilege, of power, and of inequality. Famous as Nietzsche has become—he has had a great *succès de scandale* to advertise his penetrating wit—I never heard of him until a few years ago, when, on the occasion of my contributing to the literature of philosophy a minute treatise entitled “The quintessence of Ibsenism,” I was asked whether I had not been inspired by a book called “Out at the other side of Good and Evil,” by Nietzsche. The title seemed to me promising; and in fact Nietzsche’s criticism of morality and idealism is essentially that demonstrated in my book as at the bottom of Ibsen’s plays. His pungency; his power of putting the merest platitudes of his position in rousing, startling paradoxes; his way of getting underneath moral precepts which are so unquestionable to us that common decency seems to compel unhesitating assent to them, and upsetting them with a scornful laugh: all this is easy to a witty man who has once well learnt Schopenhauer’s lesson, that the intellect by itself is a mere dead piece of brain machinery, and our ethical and moral systems merely the pierced cards you stick into it when you want it to play a certain tune. So far I am on common ground with Nietzsche. But not for a moment will I suffer any one to compare me to him as a critic. Never was there a deafer, blinder, socially and politically inept academician. He has fancies concerning different periods of history, idealizing the Romans and the Renaissance, and deducing from his idealization no end of excellences in their works. When have I ever been guilty of such professorial folly? I simply go and look at their works, and after that you may talk to me until you go black in the face about their being such wonderful fellows: I know by my senses that they were as bad artists, and as arrant intellect-mongers, as need be. And what can you say to a man who, after pitting his philosophy against Wagner’s with refreshing ingenuity and force, proceeds to hold up as the masterpiece of modern dramatic music, blazing with the merits which the Wagnerian music dramas lack—guess what! “Don Giovanni,” perhaps, or “Orfeo,” or “Fidelio”? Not at all: “Carmen,” no less. Yes, as I live by bread, as I made that bread for many a year by listening to music, Georges Bizet’s “Carmen.” After this one is not surprised to find Nietzsche blundering over politics, and

social organization and administration in a way that would be impossible to a man who had ever served on a genuine working committee long enough—say ten minutes—to find out how very little attention the exigencies of practical action can be made to pay to our theories when we have to get things done, one way or another. To him modern Democracy, Pauline Christianity, Socialism, and so on are deliberate plots hatched by malignant philosophers to frustrate the evolution of the human race and mass the stupidity and brute force of the many weak against the beneficial tyranny of the few strong. This is not even a point of view: it is an absolutely fictitious hypothesis: it would not be worth reading were it not that there is almost as much evidence for it as if it were true, and that it leads Nietzsche to produce some new and very striking and suggestive combinations of ideas. In short, his sallies, petulant and impossible as some of them are, are the work of a rare spirit and are pregnant with its vitality. It is notable that Nietzsche does not write in chapters or treatises: he writes leading articles, leaderettes, occasional notes, and epigrams. He recognizes that humanity, having tasted the art of the journalist, will no longer suffer men to inflict books on it. And he simplifies matters, quite in the manner of the leading article writer, by ignoring things as they are, and dealing with things as it is easiest, with our prejudices and training, to think they are, except that he supplies the training and instils the prejudices himself as he goes along, instead of picking up those that lie about the street as one does in writing leaders for the daily press.

There are two reasons why I can say no more than this about Nietzsche. The first is that I am lying on a hillside in the sun; basking, not working. The second is that I must reserve some space for Miss Clo Graves's "Mother of Three" at the Comedy, which has plucked me up from that hillside by the roots.

ZARATHUSTRA'S RETURN A WORD TO GERMAN YOUTH 1919

HERMANN HESSE

There was once a German spirit, a German courage, a German manhood that did not express themselves in the uproar of the herd or in mass enthusiasm. The last great vehicle of that spirit was Nietzsche, who, amid the business boom and sheeplike conformism that characterized the beginnings of the German Empire, became an antipatriot and anti-German. In this little book I wish to remind the young German intellectuals of that man, of his courage and solitude, and in so doing turn their minds away from the herd outcry (whose present whining tone is not a jot more pleasant than the brutal, bullying tone it assumed in those "great days") to a few simple facts and experiences of the soul. With regard to nation and collectivity, let every man act as his needs and conscience dictate—but if in the process he loses himself, his own soul, whatever he does will be worthless. Only a few men in our impoverished and defeated Germany have begun to recognize that weeping and complaining are fruitless, and to gird themselves like men for the future. Only a few suspect how deeply the German mind had degenerated long before the war. If we wish once again to have minds and men capable of securing our future, we must not begin at the tail end, with political methods and forms of government, but at the beginning, with the building of the personality. That is the subject of my little book. It first appeared anonymously in Switzerland (where it went into several printings), because I did not wish to arouse the young people's distrust with a familiar name. I wanted them to consider it without prejudice, and that they did. Accordingly, I have no further ground for remaining anonymous.

Hermann Hesse's preface
to the first signed edition

When the rumor went round among the young people in the capital that Zarathustra had reappeared and had been seen here and there in the streets and squares, a few young men went out to look for him. These were young men who had returned home from the war and were seized with anguish amid the change and upheaval of their homeland, for they saw

From Hermann Hesse, *If the War Goes On*, translated by R. Manheim. Copyright 1970. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc. and Jonathan Cape Ltd.

that great things were happening, but the meaning of these things was obscure and to many they were without rhyme or reason. In former years all these young men had looked upon Zarathustra as their prophet and guide; they had read what is written concerning him with the enthusiasm of youth; they had spoken and thought about him on their wanderings over heath and mountain, and at night in the lamplight of their rooms. And because the voice that first and most forcefully turns a man's thoughts to his own self and his own fate is held sacred, they had held Zarathustra sacred.

. . .

Of Destiny

So spake Zarathustra to us:

One thing is given to man which makes him into a god, which reminds him that he is a god: to know destiny.

What makes me Zarathustra is that I have come to know Zarathustra's destiny. That I have lived his life. Few men know their destiny. Few men live their lives. Learn to live your lives! Learn to know your destiny!

You have been lamenting so much over the destiny of your people. But a destiny we lament over is not yet ours; it is an alien, hostile destiny, an alien god and evil idol, a destiny flung at us like a poisoned arrow out of the darkness.

Learn that destiny does not come from idols; then at last you will know that there are no idols or gods! As a child grows in a woman's womb, so destiny grows in each man's body, or if you will you may say: in his mind or soul. They are the same thing.

And just as the woman is one with her child and loves it beyond all else in the world—so must you learn to love your destiny beyond all else in the world. It must be your god, for you yourselves must be your gods.

When destiny comes to a man from outside, it lays him low, just as an arrow lays a deer low. When destiny comes to a man from within, from his innermost being, it makes him strong, it makes him into a god. It made Zarathustra into Zarathustra—it must make you into yourself!

A man who has recognized his destiny never tries to change it. The endeavor to change destiny is a childish pursuit that makes men quarrel and kill one another. Your emperor and generals tried to change destiny, and so did you. Now that you have failed to change destiny, it has a bitter taste and

you look upon it as poison. If you had not tried to change it, if you had taken it to heart as your child, if you had made it into your very own selves, how sweet it would taste! All sorrow, poison, and death are alien, imposed destiny. But every true act, everything that is good and joyful and fruitful on earth, is lived destiny, destiny that has become self.

Before your long war, you were too rich, my friends, you and your fathers were too rich and fat and glutted, and when there was pain in your bellies, you ought to have recognized destiny in your pain and harkened to its good voice. But, children that you were, the pain in your bellies made you angry and you contrived to think that hunger and want were the source of your pain. And so you struck out: to conquer, to gain more space on earth, to acquire more food for your bellies. And now that you have returned home and have not gained what you were after, you have started to moan again, you are beset by all manner of aches and pains; once again you are looking for the wicked, wicked enemy who is responsible for your pain, and you are prepared to shoot him even if he is your brother.

Dear friends, ought you not to consider? Ought you not, just this once, to treat your pain with more respect, more curiosity, more manliness, with less infantile fear and less infantile wailing? Might your bitter pain not be the voice of destiny, might that voice not become sweet once you understand it?

Another thing, my friends. I hear your perpetual lamentations and outcries over the bitter pain and bitter fate that have descended on your people and your fatherland. Forgive me, my friends, if I am just a little distrustful of such pain, just a little reluctant to believe in it! All of you—you and you and you—are you suffering only for your people and fatherland? Where is this fatherland? Where is its head? Where is its heart? Where is the cure to begin? Tell me! Yesterday your fears were for the Kaiser, for the empire that you were so proud of, that you held so sacred. Where is all that today? Your pain did not come from the Kaiser—if it had, would it still be so bitter now that the Kaiser is gone? It did not come from the army or from the fleet or from any conquered province or possession; that is evident to you now.—But why, if you are in pain, must you go on talking about nation and fatherland, about all those great and estimable things which are so easy to talk about but which so easily vanish into thin air? Who is the people? Is it a street speaker or is it those who listen

to him; is it those who agree with him or those who brandish their cudgels and shout him down? Do you hear the shooting over there? Where is the people, your people? Is it shooting or being shot at? Is it attacking or being attacked?

You see, it is hard for men to understand each other, and still harder to understand ourselves when we persist in using such big words. If all of you—you and you—are in pain, if you are sick in body or soul, if you are afraid and have a foreboding of danger—why not, if only to amuse yourselves, if only out of curiosity, good healthy curiosity, try to put the question in a different way? Why not ask whether the source of your pain might not be you yourselves? For a brief period in the past you were all convinced that the Russians were your enemy and the root of all evil. A little while later it was the English, and then the French, and then others, and each time you were sure, and each time it was a dismal comedy, ending in misery. But now that you have seen that the pain has its source in ourselves, that we cannot heal it by blaming the enemy—why, once again, do you neglect to look for the source of your pain where it is: within yourselves. Might it not be that what pains you is not the people and not the fatherland and not world hegemony, and not democracy either for that matter, but your own stomach or liver, an ulcer or cancer inside you—and that only a childish fear of the truth and the doctor makes you imagine that you yourself are in perfect health but alas so afflicted by some ailment in your people? Might that not be so? Isn't your curiosity aroused? Might it not be an amusing exercise for each one of you to examine what ails you and try to determine its source?

You might well discover that a third or a half of your pain and then some originates in your own selves, and that it might be a good idea to take cold baths or drink less wine or undertake some other sort of cure, instead of probing and doctoring the fatherland. That, I believe, is quite possible—and wouldn't it be a fine thing? Mightn't something be done about it? Wouldn't there be hope for the future? A hope of transforming pain into profit and poison into destiny?

It strikes you as mean and selfish to forget the fatherland and heal yourselves. But perhaps, my friends, you are not as right as you suppose! Wouldn't you say that a fatherland upon which every sick citizen does not project his own ailments, which hundreds of patients do not try to doctor, might be healthier and more likely to thrive?

Ah, my young friends, you have learned so much in your

young lives! You have been soldiers, you have looked death in the face a hundred times. You are heroes. You are pillars of the fatherland. But I implore you: don't content yourselves with that! Learn more! Strive higher! And remember from time to time what a fine thing integrity is!

Action and Suffering

"What ought we to do?" you ask me. You ask me time and time again, and yourselves as well. "Doing"—action—is so important to you, indeed all-important. That is good, my friends, or rather—it would be good, if you fully understood what action is!

But you see, the very question "What ought we to do?"—What action ought we to perform?—this question of an anxious child, shows me how little you know of action.

What you young men call action, I, the old hermit of the mountains, should call by a very different name. I can think of any number of droll or appealing names for this "action" of yours. I should not have to roll it between my fingers very long to turn it neatly and amusingly into its opposite. For it is an opposite. Your "doing" is the opposite of what I call "doing."

No true action, my friends—just listen to the word, listen well, wash your ears with it!—no true action has ever been performed by one who first asked: "What ought I to do?" An action is a light that shines from a good sun. If the sun is not good, if it is not sound and many times tested, or, worse, if it is the kind of sun that asks itself anxiously what it ought to do, it will never shed light. A true action is not the same as "doing something," a true action cannot be cogitated and contrived. Very well, I shall tell you what a true action is. But first, my friends, let me tell you how this action, this "doing," you speak of strikes me. Then we shall understand each other better.

This "action" you wish to perform, which is expected to spring from searching and doubting and meandering—this action, dear friends, is the contrary and mortal enemy of true action. For your action, if you will forgive me an unpleasant word, is cowardice! I see you growing angry, I see in your eyes the look I am so fond of—but wait, hear me out!

You young men are soldiers, and before you were soldiers you, or your fathers, were merchants or manufacturers or the like. Taught in a deplorable school, they and you believed in

certain antitheses that were thought to have existed since the beginning of time and to have been created by the gods. These antitheses were your gods. From one of them, the antithesis between man and god, you inferred that a man cannot be a god, and conversely. Zarathustra can find no plainer, simpler way of showing you the dubious and despicable character of those time-honored, sacrosanct antitheses than to open your eyes to the antithesis you so staunchly believe in: that between action and suffering.

Action and suffering, which together make up our lives, are a whole; they are one. A child suffers its begetting, it suffers its birth, its weaning; it suffers here and suffers there until in the end it suffers death. But all the good in a man, for which he is praised or loved, is merely good suffering, the right kind, the living kind of suffering, a suffering to the full. The ability to suffer well is more than half of life—indeed, it is all life. Birth is suffering, growth is suffering, the seed suffers the earth, the root suffers the rain, the bud suffers its flowering.

In the same way, my friends, man suffers destiny. Destiny is earth, it is rain and growth. Destiny hurts.

What you call action is a running-away from pain, a not-wanting-to-be-born, a flight from suffering! You, or your fathers, called it "action" when you bustled about night and day in shops and factories, when you heard many many hammers hammering, when you blew quantities of soot into the air. Don't misunderstand me, I have nothing against your hammers, your soot, or your fathers. But I cannot help smiling when you speak of your bustling as "action." It was not action, it was merely a flight from suffering. It was painful to be alone—and so men established societies. It was painful to hear all manner of voices within you, demanding that you live your own lives, seek your own destiny, die your own death—it was painful, and so you ran away, and made noise with hammers and machines, until the voices receded and fell silent. That is what your fathers did, that is what your teachers did, and that is what you yourselves did. Suffering was demanded of you—and you were indignant, you didn't want to suffer, you wanted only to act! And what did you do? First, in your strange occupations you sacrificed to the god of deafening noise, you were so busy with your activity that you had no time to suffer, to hear, to breathe, to drink the milk of life and the light of heaven. No, you had to be active, perpetually active, perpetually doing. And when the fuss and bustle proved futile, when the destiny within you, instead of ripening into

sweetness, decayed and turned to poison, you multiplied your activity, you created enemies for yourselves, first in your imagination, then in reality; you went to war, you became soldiers and heroes. You have made conquests, you have borne insane hardships and done gigantic deeds. And now? Are you content? Are your hearts happy and serene? Is destiny sweet to your taste? No, it is bitterer than ever, and that is why you are clamoring for more action, rushing into the streets, storming and shouting, electing councils, and loading your guns again. All because you are forever in flight from suffering! In flight from yourselves, from your souls!

I hear your answer. You ask me whether what you have suffered was not suffering. Was it not suffering when your brothers died in your arms, when your flesh froze to the ground or quivered under the surgeon's knife? Yes, all that was suffering—suffering that you brought upon yourselves by your own obstinacy, impatient suffering, a striving to change destiny. It was heroic—insofar as a man who runs away from destiny, who wants to change it, can be heroic.

It is hard to learn to suffer. Women succeed more often and more nobly than men. Learn from them! Learn to listen when the voice of life speaks! Learn to look when the sun of destiny plays with your shadows! Learn to respect life! Learn to respect yourselves!

From suffering springs strength, from suffering springs health. It is always the "healthy" who suddenly collapse, who are laid low by a puff of air. Those are the men who have not learned to suffer. Suffering toughens a man; suffering tempers him. Those who run from all suffering are children! I love children, but how can I love those who want to be children all their lives? And that is how it is with all of you, who, in your dismal infantile fear of pain and darkness, run from suffering into activity.

See what you have accomplished with all your fuss and bustle and sooty occupations! What have you got left? Your money is gone and with it all the glitter of your cowardly business. And what true action has all your activity engendered? Where is the great man, the shining hero, the man of action? Where is your Kaiser? Who is to take his place? And where is your art? Where are the works that would justify your times? Where are the great, joyful ideas? Ah, you have suffered far too little and not nearly well enough to produce anything good and radiant!

For true action, good and radiant action, my friends, does

not spring from activity, from busy bustling, it does not spring from industrious hammering. It grows in the solitude of the mountains, it grows on the summits where silence and danger dwell. It grows out of the suffering which you have not yet learned to suffer.

On Solitude

My young friends, you ask after the school of suffering, the forge of destiny. Don't you know? No, you who are forever talking of the people and dealing with the masses, who wish to suffer only with them and for them, you do not know. I am speaking of solitude.

Solitude is the path over which destiny endeavors to lead man to himself. Solitude is the path that men most fear. A path fraught with terrors, where snakes and toads lie in wait. The men who have walked alone, those who have explored the deserts of solitude: is it not said that they went astray, that they were evil or sick? And heroic deeds: do men not speak of them as though they had been the work of criminals—because they think it best to discourage themselves from taking the path to such deeds?

And Zarathustra himself—is it not said that he died in madness and that at bottom everything he said and did was madness? And when you heard such talk, didn't you feel the blood rushing to your cheeks? As though it might have been nobler and worthier of you to become one of those madmen, as though you were ashamed of your lack of courage?

My dear friends, let me sing you the song of solitude. Without solitude there is no suffering, without solitude there is no heroism. But the solitude I have in mind is not the solitude of the blithe poets or of the theater, where the fountain bubbles so sweetly at the mouth of the hermit's cave.

From childhood to manhood is only one step, one single step. In taking that step you break away from father and mother, you become yourself; it is a step into solitude. No one takes it completely. Even the holiest hermit, the grumpiest old bear in the bleakest of mountains, takes with him, or draws after him, a thread that binds him to his father and mother, to the loving warmth of kinship and friendship. My friends, when you speak so fervently of people and fatherland, I see the thread dangling from you, and I smile. When your great men speak of their "task" and responsibility, that thread hangs out of their mouths. Your great men, your leaders and orators,

never speak of tasks directed against themselves, they never speak of responsibility to destiny! They hang by a thread that leads them back to mother and to all the cozy warmth that the poets recall when they sing of childhood and its pure joys. No one severs the thread entirely, except in death and then only if he succeeds in dying his own death.

Most men, the herd, have never tasted solitude. They leave father and mother, but only to crawl to a wife and quietly succumb to new warmth and new ties. They are never alone, they never commune with themselves. And when a solitary man crosses their path, they fear him and hate him like the plague; they fling stones at him and find no peace until they are far away from him. The air around him smells of stars, of cold stellar spaces; he lacks the soft warm fragrance of the home and hatchery.

Zarathustra has something of this starry smell, this forbidding coldness. Zarathustra has gone a long way on the path of solitude. He has attended the school of suffering. He has seen the forge of destiny and been wrought in it.

Ah, my friends, I don't know whether I ought to tell you any more about solitude. I should gladly tempt you to take that path, I should gladly sing you a song of the icy raptures of cosmic space. But I know that few men can travel that path without injury. It is hard, my dear friends, to live without a mother; it is hard to live without home and people, without fatherland or fame, without the pleasures of life in a community. It is hard to live in the cold, and most of those who have started on the path have fallen. A man must be indifferent to the possibility of falling, if he wants to taste of solitude and to face up to his own destiny. It is easier and sweeter to walk with a people, with a multitude—even through misery. It is easier and more comforting to devote oneself to the "tasks" of the day, the tasks meted out by the collectivity. See how happy the people are in their crowded streets! Shots are being fired, their lives are in danger, yet every one of them would far rather die with the masses than walk alone in the cold outer night.

But how, my young friends, could I tempt you or lead you? Solitude is not chosen, any more than destiny is chosen. Solitude comes to us if we have within us the magic stone that attracts destiny. Many, far too many, have gone out into the desert and led the lives of herd men in a pretty hermitage beside a lovely spring. While others stand in the thick of the crowd, and yet the air of the stars blows round their heads.

But blessed be he who has found his solitude, not the solitude pictured in painting or poetry, but his own, unique, predestined solitude. Blessed be he who knows how to suffer! Blessed be he who bears the magic stone in his heart. To him comes destiny, from him comes authentic action.

. . .

World Betterment

Young friends, there is an expression that dismays me when I hear it in your mouths—when it does not make me laugh! That expression is “world betterment.” You used to sing that song in your associations and herds; your Kaiser and all your prophets were especially given to that song: the German soul, went the refrain, will make the world whole.

Friends, we must learn to desist from judging whether the world is good or bad, and we must forgo the strange pretension that it is up to us to better it.

The world has often been denounced as bad, because the denouncer had slept badly or had too much to eat. The world has often been praised as a paradise, because the praiser had just kissed a girl.

The world wasn’t made to be bettered. Nor were you made to be bettered. You were made to be yourselves. You were made to enrich the world with a sound, a tone, a shadow. Be yourself, then the world will be rich and beautiful! Be other than yourself, be a liar and a coward, then the world will be poor and seem in need of betterment.

Now in particular, in these strange times, the song of world betterment is being sung again with a will, shouted from the rooftops. Can’t you hear how ugly and drunken it sounds? How insensitive, how unhappy, how unintelligent and unwise? And this song is like a frame that can be fitted to any picture. It fitted the Kaiser and his policemen; it fitted your famous German professors, Zarathustra’s old friends! This ungainly song fits democracy and socialism, the League of Nations and world peace; it fits the abolition of nationalism, and the new nationalism as well. Your enemies are singing it too; you are like two choruses trying to sing each other into the ground. Haven’t you noticed that wherever this song is struck up men reach for their pockets; it is a song of self-interest and self-seeking—alas, not the noble self-seeking that elevates and steels the self, but the self-seeking that hinges on money and money-bags, vanities and delusions. When man becomes ashamed of

his self-seeking, he speaks of world betterment; he hides behind such words.

I don't know, my friends, whether the world has ever been bettered. Perhaps it has always been as good and as bad as it is. I don't know, I am not a philosopher, I have too little curiosity in that direction. But this I do know: if the world has ever been bettered, if it has ever been made richer, more alive, happier, more dangerous, more amusing, this has not been the work of reformers, of betterers, but of true self-seekers, among whom I should so like to count you. Those earnestly and truly self-seeking men who have no goal and no purposes, who are content to live and to be themselves. They suffer much, but they suffer willingly. They are willing to be sick, provided they are privileged to die their own death, the death that they themselves have come by, their very own!

By such men the world has perhaps been bettered now and then—just as an autumn day is made better by a little cloud, a little brown shadow, a swift flight of birds. There is no reason to believe that the world needs more betterment than it can obtain from the presence of a few men—not cattle, not a herd, but a few men, a few of the rare beings who rejoice us as a flight of birds or a tree by the seashore rejoices us—by the mere fact that they exist, that there are such men. If you are ambitious, my young friends, if you want to strive after honor, then strive after this honor! But such striving is dangerous, it leads through solitude, and it can easily cost you your lives.

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Martin Heidegger, the leading figure in German existentialism, is the author of *Being and Time*, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, and other works.

Hermann Hesse (1877–1962), German novelist and poet, is best known for such works as *Siddhartha*, *Demian*, *Magister Ludi*, and *Steppenwolf*. He received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1946.

Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) is, with Heidegger, the most important figure in German existentialism and responsible for twentieth-century interest in Nietzsche. He is the author of a three-volume *Philosophie*, *Man in the Modern Age*, *Reason and Existenz*, *Nietzsche*, *Nietzsche and Christianity*, *The Future of Mankind*, and many other works.

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Thomas Mann (1875–1955), an outstanding twentieth-century German novelist and essayist, is author of *Doctor Faustus*, *The Magic Mountain*, and other works.

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Max Scheler (1874–1928), a German philosopher, is well known for his work in phenomenology, particularly his *Formalism in Ethics*, *Ressentiment*, *The Nature of Sympathy*, and his writings on sociology.

George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), the great British dramatist, essayist and humorist, is author of *Arms and the Man*, *Major Barbara*, *Pygmalion*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *Man and Superman*, and other works.

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Philosophy

NIETZSCHE

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Edited by Robert Solomon

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